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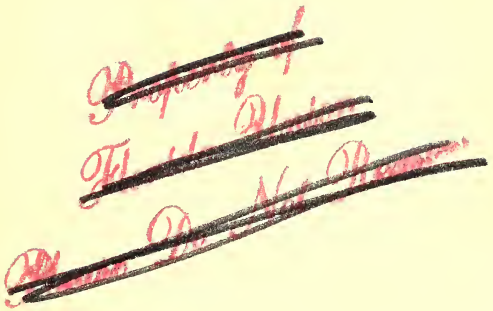

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A FOREST OF EYES

Fear, Hatred, Faith and Tyranny, who spread

Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

SHELLEY

ALSO BY VICTOR CANNING

THE CHASM

PANTHER'S MOON

THE GOLDEN SALAMANDER

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VICTOR CANNING

A FOREST OF EYES

M. S. MILL CO. AND WILLIAM MORROW & CO.

NEW YORK, 1950

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A FOREST OF EYES

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DAY ONE

The window was dirty. Outside, the oppressive sirocco wind drove the sea into ridges curded with grey crests. Along the coast the fronds of the tufted palms and the loose jasmine and bougainvillaea pads on the villa walls were fretted in the warm air currents. Beyond the bone-grey line of the headland the distant coast was a dark purple smear like a wet brush mark. Vladimir Zarko watched the dust-wraiths on the sea-road and the stolid, herd-like swaying of the holm oaks on the island of Lokrum across the water.

A fly made an angry noise in the deep embrasure and began to butt against the museum window, moving up and down with a fat, iridescent panic. A shadow of irritation on his amiable face, Zarko drew his silver pencil from the breast pocket of his blue suit and pressed the blunt end against the creature. Carefully he wiped the end of the pencil and turned away. Any other day he would have let the fly be, but today . . . Men and women under that sultry wind found themselves propelled into extremes of character, a jest became an insult, anxiety an intolerable burden.

He smiled to himself as he walked, unheeding the still cases with their faded peasant costumes, the long shelves with their dull pottery and labelled lumps of quartz, remembering the words of his father. On a day of bad sirocco take a flagon of wine and go up into the Karst, find a cave and sit and drink alone. Wine and a solitary cave had been his father's solution for most troubles. His father had been a

wheelwright and had broken his neck in a drunken stumble.

Zarko walked down the long gallery, a short, plumpish middle-aged figure, and as he went he took out his handkerchief and wiped his face free of sweat. Even though the museum was in the fortress overlooking the small harbor, within walls of thick biscuit-colored limestone, the air was hot and damp.

Near the door the attendant, an oldish man in a faded blue uniform, was sitting on a backless wooden chair behind his counter. He looked up as Zarko came into the hallway and moved towards the door. Momentarily the book he was reading dropped to his knees.

"The sirocco comes early this year, comrade. By this evening it will be gone."

Then, on an impulse, Zarko turned and went across to the attendant. The books men read these days were always of interest.

"What are you reading?" He spoke loudly, his voice ringing uneasily in the shadowed roof-spaces. The attendant looked at him, unsmiling, and then raised the book so that he saw the title. It was a book of verse by the Croat poet, Vladimir Nazor. At the sight of the name, the sharpness behind his question dissipated and he smiled.

"It is a good name—Vladimir."

"Good poems too." And with an ingratiating note the man quoted—

> "All that was under the embers,
> Smouldering within our hearts
> Like fire blazes—
> Comrade Tito! Tito! Tito!"

Zarko nodded approvingly and passed on, through the great wooden doors to the broad parapeted walk that linked the fortress to the inner harbor. As he went through the door, the attendant watched, waited for the slow swing of the door

to settle and then, with an unhurried glance around the empty hall, he gathered the spittle in his mouth and spat expressively and with great content into the water bucket by his chair.

Along the wall of the harbor rowing and fishing boats jostled each other in the choppy surge. Zarko lowered his head a little against the pulse of the hot wind and hurried along the embattlement to the steep steps at the far end which led down to the quay. The scrubbed tables in the small angle of the harbor which was the fish market were empty, and a couple of fishermen were curled uncomfortably into a wall niche, smoking and talking. Zarko passed them and the few people on the quay, giving no sign of his awareness of their existence. But he was aware of them all, and could have catalogued their life history, their dependability, their prospects and their fears. He was aware, too, of the town on his left, of the rising jumble of grey and yellow houses, the blunt upthrust of churches and the dark, climbing alley-ways and, on the far side of the small harbor, beyond the bathing beach, and the old houses around the Ploce Gate, the grey slopes, olive-studded and yellow-patched with pyrethrum of Mount Sergio.

The loggia of the Gradska Kavana faced the harbor, only a stretch of cobbles separating it from the water's edge. All the tables were empty. Nobody sat outside on a day of sirocco. The wind teased cruelly at the pink and yellow blooms in the flower boxes along the edge of the loggia, and two sheets of a newspaper swirled in the warm air across the stones like a pair of fantastic dancers. Through the large-paned windows at the back of the loggia Zarko, as he threaded his way through the empty tables, saw that the café interior was crowded. As Zarko went into the crowded café he was greeted by a rush of tobacco smoke, the warm smell of coffee, the surge of voices and the thin, gentle sound of the orchestra. The room was long and broad, like a crypt of gigantic size,

great pillars springing from the floor to branch sturdily into the low roof.

Zarko sat down at an empty table near the orchestra. A waiter, quickly and without instruction, brought him a glass of water, his coffee and a daily paper.

The townspeople of Dubrovnik he knew well. During the winter they had the place to themselves. But now, it was the summer, the beginning of the tourist season. Scattered amongst the familiar groups were Hungarians, Czechs, and a few Poles, officials who had come from Belgrade and Zagreb, youth parties passing through from Kotor on their way up to Split and Rijeka. At the far side of the room, near the serving counter, four peasant girls drank together, their dark hair braided, the brocade and stiff linen of their costumes shining white and yellow. Zarko smiled as he noticed they had kicked off their shoes under the table. Above them on the wall was a large photograph of Marshal Tito, and something in the conjunction pleased him. A new life, a new beginning . . . the country had always needed that, he had always needed it.

Out of the lot, he found his interest, his true curiosity, reduced to four people. He lifted his paper and leaned back against the wall seat, adjusting himself so that he could read and observe still.

To his right the orchestra began to play a Serbian love song and the girl standing by the piano stepped forward a little as she sang. She was tall, her breasts small and set high. He smiled as he watched her, for the sight of her stirred old memories in him. She was like all her family, leggy and with that fair hair which in childhood was almost white, deepening with the years to a pale gold. In the old days, when he had been with his father, he had touched his cap to her when they had gone to the villa to work. Now, she had to work and he wondered what thoughts lay behind the smile she showed to the people here. Her own smile she kept hidden.

In the old days as a young man he had often rowed her and her mother across to Lokrum . . . he remembered the thin, eager body of the child, restless, leaning over the side of the boat to snatch at passing seaweed. Her mother had always tipped him well . . . But now all that was changed.

He turned a page of his paper, and slid around so that over his arm he could see the table immediately to his left. Two Englishmen sat there. Everyone knew they were English and everyone preserved the polite fiction of pretending they were not there. One of them was drawing on a piece of paper. He watched them. They took no notice of anyone else. The one who was drawing seemed slightly younger than the other. He was dark, and in the lapels of his linen suit he wore a blue iris bud. The face, raised from the drawing for a moment, was long, quietly humorous, yet with an odd solemnity about the mouth. 'Robert Hudson,' Zarko played silently with the strange syllables, then, remembering the details which had followed them down from Belgrade, added, 'thirty-six, engineer, treat with all courtesy.' The other was the shorter, and fleshier, his hair fair, his face creased from some joke which had occupied him from birth, the lips pouting, sensual, his body sprawled back in his chair, so that Zarko could see the wrinkled socks above his shoes and a line of bare flesh below the out-thrust trouser-legs. 'John Raikes,' and then, his own comment, the official information forgotten, 'not to be trusted alone with a woman or a bottle.'

The girl came to the end of her song and a ripple of applause disturbed the café talk. Zarko saw Raikes raise his face towards the girl, and he began to clap vigorously, the sound like the noisy beat of pigeon's wings. His companion glanced at him, amused, and then looked casually across at the girl. Then he turned back to his drawing.

Zarko's attention went beyond them to the next table. An elderly man sat there with a glass of *rakia* before him. He was thin, unshaven, his face grey and beaded with tiny sweat

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drops. His lips moved with a soundless anger at the sight of Zarko. He got up suddenly and began to walk towards Zarko. The orchestra was playing a noisy dance, drowning the girl's voice. Ten paces from Zarko, the man halted, drew a revolver and fired a single shot. The bullet passed through Zarko's newspaper, over his shoulder and glanced off the stone wall behind him in the direction of the orchestra. At the sound the music stopped, the café voices were suddenly suspended in surprised echoes and faces were turned towards Zarko and the man. He stood there, rather stupidly now, swaying a little, as though the effort had left him weak, and Zarko knew he would not fire again.

Noise and movement returned to the room like the angry wash of sea breaking over pebbles. Men and women stood to their feet and called, some moved back into the protection of the thick pillars, others pressed forward, and two armed militia guards came hurrying across the café, thrusting people out of their way, and seized the man. Something about his stupidity and bewilderment turned the first rough grasp of their hands into a gentler, protective hold. The revolver was taken from his hand, prized loose as a father takes a dangerous toy from a fright-shaken child. Zarko stood up and went to them. He looked at the man and then around at the waiting café.

"It's all right. Please return to your tables."

Behind him the orchestra, reinforcing the note of authority, began to play and the girl's voice struggled against the volume of sound.

"Take him away. I'll come later."

The guards eased the man between them, controlling his loose steps and led him down the room towards the street doors at the far end. Zarko watched them go. As he stood there he saw the Englishman, Hudson, rise from his table. The man moved past him and then stepped up to the orchestra. He saw Hudson take the girl's left wrist and motion her

to stop singing. For an instant she rejected the injunction with a shake of her head, but the man took her elbow and drew her firmly down from the platform. Her left wrist was lined with blood where the bullet, ricochetting, had struck her.

Zarko went over. Hudson looked up at him.

"It's only a graze, but a doctor ought to look at it."

The girl shook her head as he began to bind her wrist with his handkerchief. Zarko called to one of the violin players. "Telephone for a doctor."

The girl spoke. "No. I can walk to him. He lives only across the square." She turned to the Englishman and smiled. "Thank you." Zarko saw that it was a smile quite different from the one she used when she sang.

Hudson stood up.

"I'll come with you."

"No." She slipped away from him. "That would make me feel it is serious." The smile was still there but the note in her voice was definite.

She moved away across the café, and Hudson went back to his table. Zarko followed him. He was interested in this Englishman who spoke Serbo-Croat so well.

Hudson looked up at him.

"My congratulations on your escape."

Zarko gave a half-bow and then, remembering his official position, and the people at other tables who, pretending a polite disinterestedness, were watching, straining to hear each word, he said—"It was regrettable. Please don't think that such things happen often in Dubrovnik."

Raikes laughed. "The old man didn't seem to like you. I wonder why?" The brown face was lined with an impudent smile.

Zarko smiled gently. "I'm sorry for him. His son is in prison . . . for treason . . ." He let the phrase linger between them, watching them. "When we get old we can see no

wrong in our sons. You must not form a wrong impression of our country. Today, in Yugoslavia, we have a great work before us, and we have many difficulties . . ." As he spoke he leaned forward a little to see the drawing on the paper in front of Hudson. The Englishman looked up and caught his interest.

"We know. Work and difficulties. Every country in the world is the same." He pushed the sheet of paper towards Zarko, turning it so that he could see the neat sketch of the café. "Do you like it?"

Zarko looked from the drawing to the two men and then with a note of apology said, "Forgive my curiosity." He went on, "If there is anything I can do for you while you are in Dubrovnik, please come and see me. Vladimir Zarko. I am Chief of the People's Militia—the police."

He bowed again gently and walked away.

They watched him go. Hudson lit himself a cigarette.

"Why didn't you go with the girl to the doctor?" Raikes asked.

"In this country—even if a girl's just been shot—she doesn't accept a helping hand from an Englishman. Not right under the nose of the chief of police."

"A pity. She looked interesting."

Hudson smiled at him, and then beckoned to the waiter.

Raikes was standing on the small veranda of his room when Hudson entered. He was looking through field glasses at the island of Lokrum across the water.

There was a damp towel on the floor and clothes over the chairs. The bed was crumpled where he had been lying on it after lunch and on the floor by the bedside table was a pile of books. Hung from the fastener of the inside window shutters was a long trailer of brown seaweed powdered with sand and along the window edge a collection of brightly-colored and oddly-shaped seashells.

"What do you want?" Raikes spoke without turning.

Hudson went to the pile on the floor.

"The book you took from my room in Belgrade," he said, picking the book out of the pile. When he had last seen it, it had been new, unread, waiting with a fresh primness for his reading. Now the paper cover was torn and stained, the boards bent and curved from bad packing. As he riffled the pages, stale shreds of tobacco gritted between the leaves. He held it up between his fingers fastidiously.

"Do you ever have nightmares in which you're being chased round an untidy hotel bedroom by an enormous dog-eared, gravy-stained book?"

"Did you say book or blonde?" Raikes spoke without turning.

"Book."

"No."

Raikes dropped the glasses and half-turned. The hot wind from the Adriatic stirred the fair damp hair, and the plump face was lined with an unrepentant smile.

"My whole life has been one long fight against my untidy nature." Raikes chuckled and turned to his glasses.

"I should say the last fight took place in here five minutes ago. Your nature seems to have won again."

"Go to hell." Raikes said it gently, adjusting the focus of his glasses.

Hudson went and stood by his side. Below them was the hotel terrace and then the rough drop of the ground to the sea, a slope cut into terraces, grey rock, cactus and pine-fringed walks and little beds of flowers overhung with unclipped banks of shrubs, mimosa, bougainvillaea and jasmine which filled the air with a syrupy sweetness.

"What are you looking at?"

"There's a woman bathing from one of the villas further along." His head nodded to the left.

"Yesterday, when I came in at this time you were watching as well."

"She bathes every day."

Hudson smiled as he eyed Raikes; there was an extravagance of manner and spirit about the man which attracted him, the untidy hair, the ready good-humor and his boyish delight in complicated toys such as the expensive Swiss watch on his left wrist, elaborate with a date mechanism, split-second hand, self-winding, dustproof, waterproof, and seldom showing the right time.

"I wonder which you watch more—the woman bathing or the boats passing through the channel?"

Raikes lowered the glasses with a slow movement and turned. His look was now unsmiling. He stood with the glasses couched against his chest, the blue silk shirt limp over the broad muscles, brown arms flecked with a fine down of fair hair. Then he said quietly: "You're very observant."

"That's the way I was born."

Raikes moved into the room and picked up a cigarette from the floor by the dressing-table. As he lit it, he said:

"I know—careful, observant, and probably brought up by a maiden aunt."

Hudson laughed, and picking up the wet towel from the floor threw it at him. Raikes caught it and went on, "Well, I'm going for a stroll along the coast. Who knows, I may meet the bathing lady."

Back in his room, Hudson drew the shutters against the heat and the yellow haze of light and lay on his bed. His book remained unopen at his side. He had known Raikes just over three weeks, and when they had first met he had thought he was going to dislike the man. But that feeling—which he knew had arisen from his hurt pride in not being allowed to carry out this Yugoslav negotiation by himself—had soon gone. They both liked one another, and their friendship had

developed rapidly in this country where they had few contacts with other people.

He reached out his hand for the box on his bedside table and, seeing the red star of Tito on the side of the Drina cigarette as he lit it, he remembered the girl in the café, and the quiet competent authority of the Chief of Police. Poor girl, to sing in a café was bad enough, but to sing in this town under the galaxy of red Communist stars and with the face of Tito frowning pugnaciously from every wall . . . He went to sleep, half-hearing in his first movement into oblivion the distant sound of quarrying going on high up on the slopes of Mount Sergio behind the Hotel Argentina, and seeing a sweep of fair hair falling over the girl's cheeks as she bent to watch him bandage her wrist. Her dress, he had noticed, was of good quality, but her shoes had been shoddy. That was typical of this country . . . a good coat and patched trousers, a gold watch on a cheap waistcoat, nylons and a skirt six years too short . . .

A waiter woke him at four o'clock with a glass of lemonade. As he drew back the window shutters, Hudson saw that the sirocco was going.

Later, he went down the main stairway of the hotel. The place was quiet, clean and with the air of a chapel from the soft light which filtered through the colored glass windows. The few other guests he knew would still be sleeping, prolonging their siesta against the unpleasant day. In the hallway, the reception clerk, a dark Serb with his hair *en brosse* and a face pitted with pox marks, sat at his desk writing. Hudson dropped his key on the counter and the man looked up, and nodded. Raikes, Hudson remembered, had insisted that every hotel receptionist was a police spy. This man, sitting back in his shadowy cubicle, under the hanging key tabs, that were like some strange fruit, watched by the dark eyes of the inevitable Tito portrait high on the wall, marked each movement of the guests.

As he left Hudson could imagine the man writing furiously

. . . "first Englishman went out at 2.30 p.m. Second Englishman followed at 4.30 p.m. Bulge in pocket of second Englishman might be hand grenade . . ."

and then, folding the report and thrusting it, in a mad Alice in Wonderland whirl of activity, into some secret posting box.

He turned to the right along the narrow coast road, playing still with the fantasy, and yet knowing that underneath there was that bitter trace of truth. What a country, he thought, where every other man is a police informer. It was with a sense of relief that he congratulated himself on his innocence. He was an engineer, nothing else, and at the moment this country wanted him. He had nothing to fear . . . Walking slowly, he put his hand in his pocket and drew out the orange he had brought from his room.

From Dubrovnik the coast swept in a curve to the south-east, to the headland which marked the foot of Mount Sergio. The road rose gently from the town towards the headland, and along it on either side were villas and hotels. Their gardens and walks terraced the broken cliff face and most of them were half-hidden by tall growths of palms and pines, sunk in the soft cushions of oleanders and azaleas, showing here and there a white angle of wall against creepers or the slim, jasmine-wreathed upthrust of a pillar. Once the houses of the cosmopolitan rich, most of the villas were now empty, others given over to half-a-dozen families whose washing signalled from loggia to balcony, whose pullets scratched among the weedy beds of unattended zinnias and petunias. The Hotel Argentina lay halfway along the road to the headland and, just beyond it, a smaller road, rutted and dusty, broke away from the coast road and wound at a lower level towards the headland.

It was this track which Hudson took, moving slowly, pausing now and again to lean over the low wall to his right to

look down into the overgrown gardens. The road itself was bordered with a thick cactus growth, agaves that thrust their dead, heraldic stems ten and twelve feet into the air, and prickly pear with red and yellow flowers studding their spiny pads. At the end of the track was a disused Benedictine Abbey, dark and shuttered, the bell gone from the tiny belfry over the main door, and the angles of the thick walls damp and malodorous from serving the convenience of a careless public. Hudson hurried around it and followed the track out to the hillside, now free of villas. The wind had veered and the oppressive dampness and heat were lifting. A rift slowly widened in the sky to the southwest and for a moment a clean wash of sunlight poured through, enlivening the leaden stretch of water between the mainland and the island into a dancing bed of blue and white chips. A few fishing boats were creeping round the end of Lokrum, heading up into the wind, and from the thinning haze the far islands moved up into position like ponderous men-of-war emerging from the smoke and confusion of some noiseless battle.

Out here the track divided into a fingering of tiny paths, some running away uphill through the wind-crabbed olive trees, others sloping down the cliff, through patches of grey limestone litter and the felt-grey clumps of sage to small coves and beaches. Where the track divided was a small notice in red and white paint, written in three languages, Serbo-Croat, German and French. It read—*Keep to the path. Hillside mined.* The paint was weathered, the wording almost undecipherable and the board loosely propped against a cairn of stones.

Hudson hesitated, and then moved on, keeping to the main path. The whole of the coast had been mined by Germans and Italians, by the partisans and Chetniks, and very few of the mines had been cleared except from the roads and the main hill tracks.

A gull came shrieking down the hill, slanting across the

wind. On the path before him, a hundred yards away, rising as though from the ground as they moved over the curve of the cliff, he saw two men. They were an old man and a youth, peasants. The old man's face was shadowed under a battered straw hat. The youth wore a short cotton singlet and thin blue-and-white striped trousers which the wind pressed against his young limbs. They came towards him with slow, careful steps, and he stood and waited for them. Their faces were marked with the strain of the load which they carried, stretcher-wise, between them. They came up to him, and as he blocked their path, they halted and he saw that they carried between them an old door. On it, covered by a sailcloth, lay something long and bulky. They stood stiffly, looking at him, waiting for him to give them passage, and the old man's face was solemn, resigned, as though prepared to wait, but the youth, throwing the long hair back which the wind fanned over his face, made an impatient movement and shifted the grip of his hand on the door edge for relief.

The movement tilted the door a little and from under the near edge of the sailcloth something stirred. Hudson saw a brown arm drop free of the cloth. It hung stiffly, the fingers outspread. On the wrist was a watch, an elaborate Swiss watch with a date mechanism, split-second hand, self-winding, dustproof, waterproof . . .

Unshocked as yet, in a pause of curious unemotional numbness, Hudson stepped forward. He lifted the cloth, but his gesture was clumsy, the hard material, pulled by its own weight, slithering half from the body. Hudson closed his eyes against the unexpected horror, but against his lids the beastliness persisted, the damp fair hair, the red grimace of flesh that had been face, the ripped and lacerated torso . . . There was nothing there of the man he had known except a pulped formlessness. He heard the youth swear. Opening his eyes, Hudson saw that he had part of the door supported on one

knee and with his free hand was pulling the cloth back into position.

The old man twisted his head round, like a horse in shafts curious over the delay, and the youth swore again and frowned at Hudson and they moved forward. As they went he followed them.

Late that afternoon, in his office in a building which abutted on to the church of Sveti Jacov, Vladimir Zarko received a telegram from the Department for the Defense of the People, Obilicev venac 5, Belgrade. It was in code, and came direct to him, by-passing the normal police channels of the Federal Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from being the Police Chief of Dubrovnik he was, and this was more important, a reliable Party member and also an agent of OZNA, the secret political police. The telegram read—

Milo Lepovitch arriving tomorrow. Procedure two.

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DAY TWO

Zarko stood looking out of the window of his office. Just below him was the roof of the church, its stone tiles etched with green and yellow lichen. Beyond it, framed by the edge of the squat bell tower and the untidy line of gables of the opposite houses, he could see part of the main square. The morning crowd had thinned around the vegetable and fruit stalls and the peasant women sat by their baskets and trestles, knitting and talking, reluctant to pack up and make their way back to their village homes and the little patches of garden and field outside the town. Zarko was a man who drew a constant delight from familiar things. He liked the view from his office and knew it intimately. If a door or window in the sloping panorama of houses and gables was left open when it was usually shut, he noticed it. If the office cleaner moved one of the big leather chairs a few inches out of its usual position, the strangeness was the first thing to greet him in the morning when he entered his office. Routine and method were virtues, and he liked to feel that he had the right answer to any situation. At this moment he knew that he should be extending his sympathy to the Englishman who sat in the room behind him. To one of his countrymen he would have given readily the open sympathy which their open grief demanded. But whatever this man felt he was keeping to himself. Zarko turned away from the window and said abruptly—

"You're an engineer?"

"Yes."

"And your friend?"

"He was a technical consultant from the Export Division of our Board of Trade. He had been loaned to my firm to help with this contract."

"Contract?"

"Don't you know about it?" Hudson watched the broad, squat figure as it moved from the patch of sunlight by the window and came to the desk.

"All I know is your name, that you are an engineer, and that you are the guest here of the People's Government." Zarko sat down. Now that they were talking he felt more comfortable. He smiled. "And that I have been told to treat you with every courtesy. If you are able to tell me more . . .?"

"Why, yes. My firm is negotiating a contract to supply pit-head machinery and mining equipment to your Ministry of National Economy. Raikes and I have spent three weeks in Belgrade going over specifications and contract details. My job was the purely engineering side. He was looking after the official side, finance and delivery details . . ." It was a relief to be giving facts about Raikes rather than accepting sympathy for a loss which had affected him deeply. . . . "Except for a few small points everything is completed, but the final ratification of the contract can't be made until your Mr. Kidrich, the Minister of National Economy, returns from Hungary in two weeks' time. While we were waiting for him to return, we came here as guests of your Government."

Zarko nodded. Then said quietly, "My government would wish me to extend the deepest regret for this tragic accident."

"Thank you. I should like to know what happened."

"Your friend went bathing from a small beach at the end of the headland. He left his clothes on the grass above the beach and as he walked back he stepped on a mine. The whole of that part of the coast is mined and we have been unable to clear them all. No one saw it happen. The two

peasants discovered him some time after the accident. Last month two boys were killed higher up the slope. We put up notices—but people have such belief in their own luck. What more can we do?"

As he spoke Zarko rose and lifted from the floor by a set of filing cabinets a green tin box. He opened the padlock on it with a key from his ring and began to set out the contents on the desk. Hudson recognized the clothes which Raikes had been wearing; a blue shirt, grey flannel trousers, leather sandals and the things from his pockets, a wallet, a crumpled red silk handkerchief, a penknife and a set of poker dice advertising Martini Rossi vermouth. He looked away from the desk and his eye caught the white flash of pigeons' wings as they circled above the roof of Sveti Jacov. He was going to miss Raikes, and it was going to be some time before the sense of loss disappeared.

"With your permission I will have a man collect his effects from the hotel. They can go with these and I will send the lot off to your Embassy." Zarko began to put the things back in the box. "Your Embassy has already been informed, of course. I shall make a list of everything which perhaps you will be kind enough to check? He was a Protestant?"

"No. Roman Catholic."

"That makes it easier. Everything can be arranged for tomorrow." Zarko locked the box and put it back by the filing cabinets.

"Where is he now?"

"In the morgue—downstairs. You would like to see him?"

"No."

"If there is anything more I can do . . ."

Hudson stood up. "You've been very kind. I appreciate it." This man was being helpful. Of course Raikes and himself represented a valuable industrial development, the supply of machinery and equipment so badly needed by a crippled industry, and because of that they were privileged persons,

housed in a 'high category' hotel. If this plump, good-natured policeman were to handle him wrongly, his job would be forfeit, and yet he had a feeling that beneath the official helpfulness there was in this man a genuine sympathy and friendliness.

Zarko half-bowed. "I regret my services could not have been offered in pleasanter circumstances." He went to the door with Hudson and holding it for him said—

"You speak Serbo-Croat very well."

"I learned it in a prisoner-of-war camp from a Czech officer. He was a night club entertainer in Belgrade in the old days." Hudson saw the lift of interest in the man's expression at the last phrase.

"In the old days? In the bad old days . . ." Momentarily the correction carried provocation. "What do you think of Yugoslavia today?"

The challenge was met skillfully.

"She's travelling a very rough road."

"True. But the road is leading in the right direction." Zarko spoke vigorously and the smile was gone from his face.

"Maybe. Goodbye, and thank you for your courtesy." Hudson inclined his head and moved out into the dark passage. Zarko watched him for a moment, then slowly closed the door and returned to his desk. He sat down and stared at the portrait of Tito on the wall.

In the main square Hudson hesitated. It was nearly lunchtime. For a moment he debated whether he would go straight back to the hotel, a twenty-minute walk, or first have a drink. The hesitation reminded him of the loss of Raikes. The man had had a habit of forcing his own plans on other people. Raikes would have said, "We need a drink," and would have been on his way, knowing that the other would follow. It was Raikes who, when a two weeks' wait in the contract procedure had arisen, had said, "Dubrovnik's the place." For

someone used to making and following his own plans, Hudson realized that with Raikes he had been uncharacteristically docile.

He decided to have a drink.

In the Gradska Kavana, he ordered a *pivo*. The place was less crowded than the previous morning. The orchestra was playing quietly, almost to itself. Hudson sat sipping his beer. One or two people looked at him curiously and he guessed that the news of Raikes' death had spread. He wondered if the incident would do anything to break down their reserve. To talk to an Englishman was unwise. People were polite, but their conversation seldom went beyond the formalities of greeting and parting.

As he sat there the girl with the orchestra began to sing. He noticed that she wore a black silk band over the bandages on her left wrist. She was pleasant to watch. She was pretty and had a thin, boyish body, and he wondered if she got enough to eat. Raikes had been very interested in her, he remembered—but then Raikes had been interested in all pretty women. He recalled Raikes, his voice heavy with wine, discussing the exchange values of a bar of chocolate and a tin of corned beef in the countries of Europe, and saw Raikes pinching the bottom of the chambermaid in their Belgrade hotel. There was no ban on intimacy with English people for hotel employees, Raikes had declared, they all had instructions from OZNA to make the closest contact. Most espionage work was done either in a bar or in bed . . .

The girl finished her song and with a sudden hurried concern, as though they were late for some other appointment, the orchestra players began to pack up their instruments. They were a quiet, black-coated little party, mostly elderly. They hurried past him and were gone. The girl stayed, leisurely tidying away the sheet music. Then she threw a light overcoat over her shoulders and came down from the stand. She came across to Hudson.

"You were very kind to me yesterday. I am sorry I did not thank you properly."

"People ought not to settle their private quarrels in cafés. How is your wrist?"

"Very well." She said it demurely, like a little girl thanking her hostess for a nice party. She held a little paper packet out to him.

"What's this?"

"Your handkerchief."

He opened the packet and found his handkerchief.

"Won't you sit down and have a drink?"

She shook her head and drew back a little, and he realized the wariness in her.

"No . . . no, I don't think I'd better."

"Please do."

"No. I must go." She said it stubbornly, and again the small girl was there, doggedly repeating a lesson learned at home before the party. Hudson knew the reason, the same old reason—never talk to a foreigner in a public place. She drew her coat across her shoulders firmly, preparing to go, and said quietly—

"I'm sorry about your friend." Before he could answer she was gone, moving swiftly away between the tables.

A waiter came to him and began to clear his table.

"What is the name of the girl who sings here?"

The man straightened, holding an empty beer bottle in his hand. For a moment he sucked reflectively at his teeth, a movement which gave his mouth a lean, doggish grin.

"Franja. Franja Pazan."

"Franja?"

"Yes." The waiter wiped the table top with an exaggerated carefulness. "The beer is four dinars."

Hudson stood up, handing him a ten-dinar note.

"It is a pity that tipping is against the law. Otherwise you could have kept the change."

The man's teeth showed in a sardonic twist of the mouth as he put the note into his wallet. "Thank you, signore." He held the table aside as Hudson moved away.

Hudson walked back to the hotel and had lunch alone on the terrace. His table was drawn up against the wooden balustrade and through the loose sprays of blossom that dropped from the pergola which covered the terrace, he could look down the slope of the cliff to the palm walk and little garden above the private bathing beach. At the end of the month the place would fill up, but for the moment there were only five other groups of guests. They were all taking their lunch now. Beyond a quick nod of the head, a non-committal remark about the weather, none of the guests had ever made any attempt to become friendly and he knew that the same restraint which operated with the girl Franja existed here, too. But from Raikes—who had had an unabashed curiosity about other people and who had questioned the waiters—Hudson knew a little about the guests.

At the next table along the terrace sat a Polish professor, an authority on viniculture who, each time the waiter placed a carafe on his table, grunted and scowled at the wine like a magistrate recognizing a hardened offender with whom he had had trouble before. He sat hunched over a book during meals ignoring everyone but the waiter. He was about fifty and bald except for little wings of hair above his ears, and wore gold-rimmed thick-lensed glasses. He was dressed always in a neat, grey suit with an open-necked shirt. Wherever he went, he carried his camera and a small tin specimen box on which was neatly printed his name—Brussiak, J.

Beyond him was a harassed little man from Split, thin, shabbily dressed, with a scrawny neck, a wedge-shaped face and nervous, flickering eyes who seemed to spend the whole of his time quarrelling hopelessly and in an undertone with his large wife and trying to control the adventurous wanderings of his two children, a boy of ten with a sullen face and

tight blue serge shorts and another boy of about three who was plump, fair-haired, with a mischievous angel face and a supreme disregard for his parents' non-fraternizing orders. Madeo, the smaller boy, wandered from table to table throughout the meal. Everyone liked him and he seemed to subsist on the tidbits proffered by the rest of the company. For Raikes and Hudson he had, in the three days they had been there, developed a passionate friendship which had increased his father's nervous indigestion and made his meals even more of a trial than before. The family Ransko, Hudson felt, offered a problem in genetics. The precocious, friendly Madeo seemed to owe nothing to father or mother. As his father turned from him now and began a low-pitched expostulation with his wife, Madeo wriggled down from his seat and came trotting along to Hudson. He grinned, belched slightly, and held up a piece of paper and a pencil.

"Face."

It was an order well understood. Hudson, who liked children, took the paper and pencil and drew a man's face, large, bold and with a leering, ferocious expression. Madeo straining to the table height watched, fascinated. Hudson gave the face a plumed helmet, a widespread pair of whiskers and a wink. He had an easy talent with a pencil which Madeo had discovered on their first acquaintance. He handed the paper back to Madeo, who studied it carefully, then looked up at him and nodded gravely, commending him for having produced just what he had in mind. Then, with a sudden shriek of laughter, the child turned and began to make the round of tables, shaking off the attentions of his brother who had been sent to retrieve him. The brother gave up the attempt to stop him and meekly attended on the ritual. Each table was visited in turn and the drawing held up to be admired.

Hudson watched him, smiling, and ignoring the angry look which he received from the Ransko table.

Brussiak looked at the drawing critically, grunted, patted

the boy on the head and gave him a piece of the apple he was eating. Madeo outflanked his own family's table and trotted into the vine-hung courtyard at the end of the terrace where three more tables were occupied.

Close to the fountain in the center of the court, a Yugoslav colonel sat eating by himself. His dove-grey uniform with its red stars and gold braid was perfectly cut. As Madeo tugged at his arm, he half-turned and took the drawing. Hudson had a glimpse of a tanned, broad face and a net of wrinkles about the pale blue eyes.

"Madeo!" The mother called, but the Colonel waved his hand at her placatorily and, picking up the empty sugar bowl from the table, put it on his close-cropped head. He held his finger across the top of his lip and leered ferociously at Madeo, imitating the drawing. Madeo gave a low gurgle of delight and sat down. The Colonel picked him up, gave him a cherry from the top of his trifle and sent him off with a pat on his bottom to the next table.

Shadowed by his brother and followed by calls of decreasing conviction from his mother, Madeo finished his rounds. On the other side of the fountain sat a young couple from Zagreb. Hudson had seen them wandering about the town, silent, hand-in-hand, lost in the beatitude of their newly married bliss. Madeo's drawing left them unmoved, but they gave him a small cake which he pouched expertly in his right cheek as his brother offered to hold it for him. At the last table in the angle of the courtyard overlooking the sea sat a thin, tight-lipped man in a dark grey suit, wearing a white cloth cap. A typical Marxist, Raikes had called him, a fanatical factory foreman rewarded for a high production record by a fortnight in a high category hotel. And now, Hudson thought, determined to enjoy himself and proclaiming it to the world by exchanging a dark cap for a white one, but after that unable to think of anything else to do except sit and worry about the factory and the anticipated drop in produc-

tion during his absence. The man frowned at the drawing, transferred the frown to Madeo, who beat it down with a grin that exposed the pouched cake for a second. For a moment the tight lips loosened, the somber eyes wavered and another small cake was handed to Madeo who promptly pouched it in his left cheek.

Madeo turned and headed back towards Hudson, but his father reached out an arm and intercepted him. Madeo was dumped into his chair, receiving an expert slap across the buttocks as his father lifted him. He sat for a moment, debating the merit of tears or laughter, then with a curiously adult shrug of his shoulders his plump face assumed a wide solemnity and he settled down to the noisy business of masticating his winnings.

Hudson sat on over his coffee until all the others had left the terrace. Just as he was about to leave, the waiter who served his table came and stood by his side. The man gave him a faint smile and for a moment his eyes avoided Hudson, his hands playing gently along the edge of the table, fingering some invisible keyboard.

"As I always serve, monsieur . . . the other waiters and the staff here . . ." His eyes came up and met Hudson's frankly and for the first time the face, the blank waiter's face, became a real face, demanding attention . . . "They have asked me to express our sorrow at the unfortunate incident. Mr. Raikes was a very pleasant person. We shall all miss him." A hand came up and rubbed at the square, blue jowl.

There was no doubting the genuineness of the man's attitude, and Hudson felt himself glad to be offered sympathy.

He stood up. "Thank you." Then as the waiter with a slight bow of his short body began to turn away, "What's your name?"

"Joseph . . . Joseph Dragovar, monsieur."

Hudson put out his hand and touched the man's arm. "Thank you, Joseph . . . and the rest of the staff."

That afternoon Zarko arrived with one of his men and with Hudson in attendance, went into Raikes' room and collected his belongings. Hudson stood by while everything was packed away in two suitcases and listed carefully by Zarko's man. When the list was completed Hudson signed it and a copy was made for him.

When they had finished the room was bare, impersonal. The only note to remind him of Raikes was the long trailer of seaweed hanging by the window and the collection of shells on the ledge. Hudson picked up one of the shells and stood examining it.

"You intend to stay here?" Zarko's man had gone with the cases and the Chief of Police stood by the door, ready to depart.

"I don't know."

"If you wish to go we could arrange hotel accommodation at Split or on one of the islands. There is a very nice hotel at Kula."

"Thank you. I'll let you know."

He went back to his room after Zarko had gone, and for the first time since he had been in Dubrovnik found time heavy on his hands. He sat down and wrote a full report of the affair to his firm. He knew nothing of Raikes' relations, not even for certain that he was unmarried, though he guessed he was. His firm could pass on the news and when he got back he would go to see the family. He went down to the town to the post office with his letter and afterwards walked over the hill to Gruz, the port which carried all the commerce and traffic for Dubrovnik. By the time he got back it was already dark. In his room he slipped on his swimming trunks, threw a dressing gown over his shoulders and went down to the sea. As he passed the dining terrace, he saw that most of the guests were already eating. He was in no hurry. Every evening since his arrival he had made a habit of swimming before dinner.

The bathing place was a series of concrete platforms laid down amongst the rocks immediately below the palm garden. A little flight of steps cut into the bare stone led down to it.

Hudson dived and swam out through the dark water. Raising his head he could see the black, ragged outline of the tree-covered island. He lay, suspended in the warm oblivion of sea and sky, so that as the long swell running down from the far lights of Dubrovnik swung him up and down it seemed that he hung in some medium which was neither water nor air. Tiny beads and streamers of phosphorescence trailed away from his arms and body, and for a moment he was a new constellation, the swimmer, in a firmament full of strange stars and planets, the steady brillance of hotel and house lights, the flickering meteors of car lamps swinging down the coast road and the colored borealis from the mouth of the Gradska Kavana shining through the harbor gap. From the land came a slow breeze, fatigued with the burden of rich, flower scents.

Suddenly, between him and the island, came the clear, passionate sound of a man singing, a melody whose words were fused by distance, leaving only a rich amplitude of sound. Then a dozen great golden flares burst out of the black folds of the night, and sea and sky fell back to their proper places. Hudson, clear above the singing, heard a man swear—almost the first word his Czech cabaret entertainer had taught him—and he knew that close to him was the small fleet of sardine boats that congregated here each night to prime and light their acetylene bow flares before dropping down the coast to their fishing.

He swam back and, as he pulled himself out of the water, he decided that he would stay on in Dubrovnik. In a way it would be keeping Raikes company as long as he could. As a reason this was sentiment of the worst kind, even Raikes would have condemned it. But of all the men he had ever met he knew now that Raikes had come closest to offering,

and he to accepting, the one thing he had never felt any great desire to have, friendship. He pulled on his robe and went up the steps. Tonight he would drink to Raikes' memory. Joseph, the friendly Joseph, ought to be able to find something which would change the tone even of Professor Brussiak's grunt.

Milo Lepovitch had been inside Zarko's office five minutes when Zarko decided that he did not like the man, and he was shrewd enough to realize that Lepovitch did not like him. The man had looked around the comfortable little room, which always evoked a sense of affection and pleasure in Zarko, and the tight lines about his prim mouth had marked his disdain. Touches which made the room human for Zarko . . . the little pot of calceolarias on the shelf over the empty fire grate, the photograph of his wife and child on the desk, the rag rug on the tiles inside the door worked in a bright Montenegrin design by his wife before their marriage . . . none of these pleased Lepovitch. Zarko guessed what this precise, efficient young man from Belgrade was thinking. He saw himself exactly as he appeared to Lepovitch . . . a comfortable, not too exacting provincial policeman, enjoying the fruits of an office which had come as the reward for Party work. He decided not to get the *rakia* bottle from his desk cupboard, approving his own meanness and quite unworried by any opinion Lepovitch had formed of him. These young men from OZNA headquarters in Belgrade were all the same, lean, ruthless wolves, who felt no one could keep up with them in the chase. Lepovitch had no idea that he, too, was an OZNA man. They would work together and they would watch one another. It was a system which insured a double security. A constant watchfulness was necessary if the destiny marked out for his country were to be achieved.

Procedure two. That meant that he was to hear this man's report, work with him and give him all the assistance he

needed, that Lepovitch was to remain in the background and that the final responsibility for all actions lay with him, Zarko.

He leaned back in his chair, lit himself a cigarette and stared at the moths fluttering around the electric light above his desk. Lepovitch remained standing, walking with controlled, unhurried steps between desk and window as he talked.

"It is of the highest importance that this man should not leave the country. We know he exists, we know some of the names he has used in the past, but at the moment we don't know where he is, what he looks like or what his true nationality is."

"It's a promising start." Zarko half-smiled. Lepovitch swung round and frowned, and inwardly Zarko groaned. The man had no sense of humor. It would make working with him that much harder.

"All we know is in that report." Lepovitch nodded at the green file on Zarko's desk. "It's felt that at this moment he is in Dubrovnik somewhere."

Zarko picked up the report and flipped the pages as Lepovitch resumed his pacing and went on. Unpardonably, Zarko ceased to give him his full attention. He watched him but his words made only a high-pitched tremor of sound. Whatever he said would be in the report. The talk was merely to impress, to affirm his own competence and grasp of an important mission. Zarko guessed that he was one of the wrong kind, a careerist, in his heart not caring a button for the ideal which was dear to so many of his countrymen. Zarko had done many things of which he disapproved in his heart, but they had all been justified as means to the establishment of a regime which ultimately offered to him and others a prospect of human justice and concord, an equality of expression and rights which was important enough to make all means subservient to the end. But through all this he had never lost sight of his own essential humanity. This Lepovitch . . .

What was he? Twenty-six, perhaps, tallish, lean, trained to a physical hardness which was obscured by his neat brown suit, schooled to an impersonal efficiency which marked the thin, severe face, without a shadow of compassion to soften the still, grey eyes behind the rimless glasses. He was incomplete, a man who had missed his youth, who had forgotten how to laugh in his desperate anxiety to succeed. Not yet thirty, and already the brown hair above the ears was tipped with ash grey flecks. Zarko suddenly felt sorry for him. There had probably been no youth for him, no laughter, no carefree ripening . . . only the rough comradeship of war, the strain and exhaustion of partisan life, a leap from boy into man and afterwards the fight to maintain a place in a pack of careerists all as ruthless as himself.

"So you see, as a result of this contact in the British Embassy, we have every reason to believe that this Englishman, John Raikes, is much more than a trade official. That is why I am here, Comrade Zarko. To find out all I can about Raikes and to watch him. He isn't the man we want, but he is working with him, and means to help his escape."

"John Raikes?" Something of Zarko's surprise edged into his voice.

"Yes. He is to know nothing about me, of course."

Zarko rose from his chair. "Don't worry. He'll never know that you exist. Come with me."

Lepovitch gave him an inquiring look which he ignored. From his desk drawer Zarko took a bunch of keys and led the way out of the room.

The building had once been the house of a wealthy wine exporter. On the stone staircase the fluted roof curves were painted with flower garlands and plump cupids. Above each arch at the turn of the stairs were groups of faded tritons, mermaids and fauns. The steel studs in the heels of Zarko's boots rang harshly on the worn steps. They went down to the main, tiled hallway and a relaxed militia guard stiffened

as they appeared. The door to the office on the right was open and the sound of a man's voice on the telephone echoed thinly in the great hall. From the roof an enormous Bacchus leered down at them, one eye closed with damp, a great hand cupping the flaking breast of an abandoned matron while the other spilled wine from a goblet into the unturned face of a pouting nymph. At the end of the hall they went down a short flight of steps to what had been the old cellars. They stood in a subterranean corridor, whitewashed, still and cold under the bare electric light.

Zarko unlocked a thick wooden door at the end of the short corridor, switched the light on and motioned Lepovitch to enter.

They were in the long length of a wine vault, the side arches cleared now of bottle racks, the low ceiling of mortared stones whitewashed. There was a thin, antiseptic smell and a hostile coldness that seemed to pulse from the stones of floor and roof. At intervals down the length of the vault were four great slabs of marble supported on concrete blocks. The slabs were empty except one, to which Zarko led Lepovitch. On it lay something draped in a white sheet. Zarko fingered the edge of the sheet and looked at Lepovitch.

"John Raikes went bathing yesterday afternoon. He stepped on a land-mine and was killed. His funeral is tomorrow morning. This is John Raikes." He whipped back the sheet, but he kept his eyes on Lepovitch, watching him closely. For a moment he saw the thin lips tighten. Then Lepovitch turned and looked at him. He said quietly—

"There was no need to be dramatic. You could have told me in your room."

"You would have insisted on seeing him."

Lepovitch turned back to the body.

"Yes." He took the sheet from Zarko and drew it clear of the body. The arms were folded across the mutilated chest. Zarko moved around the slab and as he did so he no-

ticed the watch still on Raikes' wrist. He leaned forward and began to unfasten it. It would have to be put with his other effects. For a moment he held the hand, remembering the two Englishmen in the café, and to avoid the horror of the dead, the beastliness which had been a face, his eyes and mind escaped in a concentration on detail. He saw the small damp, fair hairs where the watch had been stand up slightly against the brown skin.

Lepovitch reached out for the smashed watch.

"He was wearing this when he was killed?"

"That and a pair of trunks. I have all his other stuff in my room and a full report which you can read."

Lepovitch handed the watch back. He looked at Zarko and momentarily the shadow of a smile touched his mouth. Then he turned back to the body and began to examine it with a deliberation which Zarko found hard to watch. He raised the hands, straightening the fingers as though he expected to find something clutched in the stiff grip, and lifted the earth- and stone-scarred legs. Then with an impatient movement he spread the sheet over the body and turned away. He lit himself a cigarette. Over the flame of the match he eyed Zarko and again the faintest trace of a humorless smile touched his lips. Something in the smile, the suggestion of contempt behind it, raised a passing feeling of uneasiness in Zarko. He was suddenly anxious to leave the vault, suddenly not so sure of this man as he felt he had been.

"I've some *rakia* in my office. I can show you his things and tell you what I know about him while we have a drink."

Lepovitch nodded and let the smoke trickle loosely from his mouth. He said quietly, "It is a pity he is dead. We might have learned something from him." He shrugged his shoulders and moved towards the door. "Still, even from the dead, if a man is intelligent enough, he can learn something."

Later, in his room at the Hotel Imperial, Lepovitch wrote

the first of his daily reports. It would go by air in the morning to Captain Rudi Vuksan, his chief, at the Belgrade headquarters of OZNA.

He paused in his writing, staring through the open window at the star-powdered sky above the dark bulk of the citadelled town. Before him on the table was a travelling photograph of his wife. As he turned back to his report, he glanced at it, and the stir of some inner, seldom expressed gentleness loosened the tight lines of his mouth. Then in his precise script he went on writing . . .

Attached is the official police report of the circumstances of the man's death and a list of his effects which, for the moment, remain in Comrade Zarko's possession. There are certain aspects of this investigation which, although it would be premature at this moment to place any great hopes on them, lead me to the opinion that this initial set-back may not prove to be entirely to our disadvantage.

Regarding Vladimir Zarko: My first impression is not favorable. The man has a certain bourgeois affability which I suspect to be less of a mannerism than an incompletely eradicated political tendency. His efficiency and intelligence are not outstanding. However, a more reliable assessment can only come from a longer association. . . .

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DAY THREE

After the darkness of the little church, the sunlight in the cemetery was blinding, a hardness of light which intensified all sound and laid a pitiless enamel of color over shrubs and flowers and on the rich marbles of the tombs. Hudson raised his eyes from the gently swinging red and gold of the priest's orphrey. Over the heads of the little party now moving down the main walk to the gates, he saw the lizard skin of the sea, stretched tightly to the horizon, whorled with pale greys and greens and flecked with the glare of silver. Beside the gate two cypresses, black against the sun, held themselves in offended exclamation points, seeming to tremble with a devout vigilance each time a noisy tram swung up over the hill and past the gates.

There had been few people at the ceremony; himself, Zarko and the Yugoslav colonel. Colonel Grol had come to him at dinner the previous night, given the *liebfraumilch* which Joseph had found for him a quizzical look, and had then expressed the condolences of the guests for Raikes' death and had requested to be allowed to attend the funeral. They were at the gates of the cemetery now, getting into the car which waited for Zarko. Hudson had declined Zarko's offer to ride back with him. He wanted to walk. Raikes' coffin had been slid into one of the pigeonholes which honeycombed the long wall that formed an angle of the cemetery. A marble slab had been lifted and fitted loosely over the opening and now awaited the mason who would fix it that afternoon. On the

ledge below the opening had been placed the wreaths from the hotel, from Zarko and from Hudson.

The priest touched him on the elbow.

"It is not good to stand too long in the sun with the head uncovered, my son."

Hudson looked round and saw a scored, ancient face, a skin that was blotched with the grey patches of age, but the eyes were dark, clear and surprisingly youthful. He put on his hat and began to move away. The priest went with him a few steps. They paused, an awkwardness between them for which words could do little.

"In the old days we used to see many English people in Dubrovnik. Not all of us have lost our affection for them." Hudson looked at him, cocking his head to one side. The priest raised his arm, shaking his loose sleeve free, and scratched the back of his head and for a moment there was an almost impudent look about his face. Hudson knew the difficulties of the Church in this country and he recognized for a moment a spirit which he knew must still be strongly alive in this and all other Eastern European countries. Then, as though he wished to excite no confidence, that to have shown the edge of the old spirit was enough, the priest added quietly, "You are a Catholic?"

"No, father."

"We all shelter under the same roof. I shall do penance for saying so, but perhaps it is of little importance through which door we enter the house. If you wish to, please come to see me while you are here."

Hudson thanked him and moved away towards the gates . . .

Later, in the noon-tide stillness of the cemetery, a girl slipped through the small wicket gate from the hillside and crossed quickly to the new burial place. She placed a bouquet of white roses on the ledge and, slipping back, crossed herself. She was short with a sturdy, vigorous quality, and wore a blue apron over a rough white dress and a red scarf pulled over

her dark hair and knotted under her chin. Pinned at the bosom of her dress was a small cameo brooch with the head of Mercury on it. Her face had the coarse, good looks of a peasant, the skin browned and firm with health, and her hands were seamed and red from hard work. With a nervous glance around her, she moved away and disappeared through the small gate. The roses on the hot ledge were a blinding point of light in the hot sun. Attached to the stems by a ribbon was a small piece of blue card and written on it in an unformed hand, the words—*As long as memory lasts so will my love . . .*

When Hudson reached the town he found the main street full of lunch-time strollers. Whatever this crowd might think about the political purpose which shaped their lives from Belgrade, little sign of it showed. There were shopkeepers, schoolchildren, girls from the gymnasium, little groups of peasants standing at alley corners, here and there a militia man, red star in cap and carbine slung over shoulder, and knots of soldiers on leave, swaggering by the bright-eyed girls. Hudson would have liked to talk to them, would have liked to know what the shopkeepers thought about the imminent municipalization of their shops, to question the children about the modern history they were taught, and to have an honest opinion from the peasants on co-operative marketing . . . but questions in this country were hard to put. There were always the militia guards, the soldiers, the informers, and from the house walls the cold eye of the Marshal glowering above the slogan—*Zivio drug Tito.*

Hudson went through the Gradska Kavana on to the loggia which overlooked the small harbor. He sat down at a table where he could see the great upthrust of the fortress on the right and the long line of coast running away to the left. He ordered half a bottle of the local white wine and sat lost in a broody contentment, withdrawn from the noise and movement of the café. Without Raikes this country was even

more like a prison in which one could find none of the consolations offered behind barbed wire. During the war the other prisoners with him had formed a solid community. Here each man was his own prison, locked up with his own thoughts. Even the conversation between friends was cautious, a false affability . . . and for him, a stranger in the prison, the isolation was even more complete. To talk to him would be showing an unwise interest in the forbidden land of liberty to the west.

A shadow fell over the table. He looked up. Colonel Grol was standing above him, his back to the sea, his strong, white teeth breaking across his smile. He looked like a big, clean, pink butcher dressed up in fancy uniform, the star of Tito on his breast, a highly polished revolver holster at his hip, a creation of gold braid and braggadocio.

"Mr. Hudson, you look lonely. Mademoiselle Pazan and I would be happy if you would join us at the hotel for lunch."

Hudson rose. The girl from the orchestra was standing by the Colonel, one hand resting lightly on his arm. Involuntarily Hudson glanced back through the glass doors at the orchestra which was still playing. Franja Pazan caught the look and smiled.

"Even singers, Mr. Hudson, have their free days." She spoke with an assurance which Hudson had not noticed in her before.

"I should be delighted."

The Colonel glanced from Hudson to the girl. "You know each other?"

"It was Mr. Hudson who—" She raised her bandaged wrist.

"Ah, of course." Then to Hudson. "You are a man of great resource. Franja—we must watch him. Any man who can smell out two bottles of *liebfraumilch* from the hotel is not to be trusted." He laughed, throwing back his shoulders.

"The Colonel really means that he hopes you will be able

to repeat the miracle at lunch." A smile touched her mouth for a moment.

Hudson moved with them to the steps leading down to the harbor side. "Miracles always come easier at night, but I'll see what I can do."

"We should have invited him for dinner." The Colonel paused by the rowboats drawn up for hire at the harbor wall. "Who knows—we might have got a bottle of Pommery 1921."

Hudson shook his head. "No, I'm not in that class. But from something Joseph said I think we might manage a bottle of hock."

To save the long walk around by the road, the Colonel hired a boatman to row them back to the hotel. On the way over the girl said little. She sat facing Hudson and laughing, a little perfunctorily he thought, at the constant jokes made by the Colonel. The Colonel's jokes were like the Colonel, big, obvious, and with a tendency to prove noisy. And during lunch it became clear that his conception of conversation was one in which other people said what they had to in the pauses when he gave his complete attention to his glass and plate.

Hudson sat listening, wondering what the relationship was between this man and Franja. He found it hard to decide why he had been invited, and harder still to decide what immunity it was that allowed the Colonel to utter remarks which, in this country, had the explosive quality of an adroitly tossed hand grenade.

"There are only two things which matter for me, Mr. Hudson—my country and the man who is directing it. I can give my allegiance to a man but not to any ideology. I'm a soldier. Policy I leave to others. When I meet a rogue I call him a rogue—even if I know he is also a Party member." He paused to drain his glass of hock.

"Isn't such frankness . . . dangerous?"

"A soldier takes danger in his stride. Give me a man worth following, Mr. Hudson, and one who loves his country as

Marshal Tito does—then I'll follow him. All soldiers are hero-worshippers. If Marshal Tito said tomorrow that Communism was taking us along the wrong road—then I'd believe him. Once you settle on your hero you can never allow yourself doubts." He put his glass down with a tiny crash and beamed at them. At that moment the waiter came up and told him he was wanted on the telephone. When he had gone Hudson looked at Franja.

"Explain him. He should have been liquidated long ago."

She laughed. "He's Colonel Grol, one of Tito's closest friends, his only friend some people say. Maybe Tito likes to have one completely outspoken man near him. Anyway, he survives . . . he has a great deal of influence."

"Is he your friend, too?"

"No. An acquaintance. We met in Belgrade."

Joseph, the waiter, brought them their coffee, and they were silent as he served them. Then Colonel Grol came back.

"The Commandant of the Dubrovnik Garrison wants to see me. He is sending out his car at once. Would you come back with me or wait for the boatman?" he asked Franja.

Hudson saw her hesitate. Before she could reply he said quietly—

"It's a pity to bounce about in a car so soon after lunch. We could sit in the garden and wait for the boatman."

"Do you mind?" Franja glanced at the Colonel. The man laughed.

"No. Sensible thing to do. I wish I could stay with you. I know what the Commandant wants—he wants a transfer. Soldiers are never content." He paused for a moment before leaving them and then with a frank smile, added, "Don't take too much notice of what Franja will tell you in confidence about this country, Mr. Hudson. Getting a foreigner in a quiet corner and pouring out your heart to him is a national habit these days. A good soldier must have his grumbles, so

must a good civilian. Suspect the ones who never grumble, Mr. Hudson . . ."

They went down to the palm walk and sat on the wall overlooking the sea.

"He's too outspoken to last." Hudson watched her as he spoke. She was staring across at the island, the wind lifting her hair gently, the profile of her face cut clearly against the far sky. He went on: "He's very clever. After what he said, you don't feel you can confide in me. He's put up the barrier."

She turned and laughed quietly, and his answering smile gave her a sudden warmth. He knew how she was feeling and had broken through her embarrassment.

"I don't have to say anything. You've seen this country. People have talked to you—"

"Yes. At the end of a railway corridor, leaning over the parapet of a bridge, sitting on a park seat, and always the head jerking first over one shoulder, then the other to see who's watching or listening. The 'tic totalitario' the Italians call it."

"It's a disease."

"Only people with stiff necks are safe."

She laughed, this time unguarded. She felt safe, free to say the first thing that came into her mind, and curiously she felt no need to say it.

"How long will you be here?" The question was spoken before she was fully conscious of its being formed in her mind.

"Quite a long time—two weeks, maybe."

Quite a long time. To her it was no time. She was conscious of a quick, rising bitterness directed against him. He could sit and talk to her, give her a brief freedom, and then he would go. Nothing would have touched him. He came from a different world. She looked at him, saw the creased skin about his eyes as he stared at the island and the glittering

sea; he looked contented, strong, sure of himself . . . everything she lacked. Then she was ashamed of herself, knowing that this was only a shadow passing over the pleasure she felt in sitting here with him. But the moment had somewhere betrayed itself to him. He turned and touched her hand where it rested on the wall between them.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"I'm a good listener. You can say what you like to me."

She swung off the wall. "The boat's coming."

He stood beside her, ignoring her words. "Will it help if I say it for you?"

"I'm sorry. I suddenly felt mean. I think I hated you for being able to go so easily."

Hudson knew that inside her, held back now by habit rather than fear, was a spate of words piling up like a floodstream against sluice gates.

"So you should. Say you hate me because I'm free, say you hate your own fear, say that you want to tear down every photograph of Tito you see, say you hate the sky at night because all the stars have turned red—"

"Please—" She caught his arm, stopping him, and he heard her breathe heavily, a shedding of some emotional pressure which restored her. Then she went on quietly, holding his arm as they went down to the rocks to meet the boatman. "Colonel Grol warned you not to take too much notice of what I would say."

Hudson steered her over the rocks to where the boat lay waiting.

"The Colonel gave us a false start. We'd better begin again. Tomorrow afternoon we'll go bathing together and then you can come back to the hotel for tea. Do you agree?"

She looked at him for a moment holding his hand for support as the boat edged in. And she knew she wanted to see

him again, wanted to be with him and this time be free to laugh and enjoy herself. She smiled and nodded.

Before dinner, Hudson went down for his usual evening swim. He threw his robe into the little cubicle built against the rock face and stood for a moment anticipating the pleasure of the water. Since lunch he had been disturbed, and he knew the reason for it had been Franja. All his life, his relations with women had been straightforward, uncomplicated liaisons brought about by a simple responsiveness on both sides. Emotion for him had seldom been more than a decorative pretense fashioned about a common affection, comradeship and his own unashamedly sensual nature. No parting had ever left him wounded, no pleasure had ever seemed to hold any greater potential than could be drawn from the passing moment. But with this girl, who attracted him as so many other women had done, he knew that there could never be any simple question of an uncomplicated response. She was disturbed in herself, she was unhappy and resentful of her unhappiness. For that she had all his sympathy. But there was an integrity in her which would demand more than pretense. He knew she would never be satisfied with what he had to give.

He swam out through the darkness, and ahead of him he saw the rising bulk of the island, and heard the voices of the sardine fishermen carried gently across the water. In a little while their bow lights would burst into roaring life. Treading water he could just make out the shape of their boats a hundred yards form him. He swam towards them, curious and, because of the darkness and undefined limits of the water, glad to have an objective. When one moves, one must move towards something, he thought. Movement without object was unsatisfying, and then, amused by his own pretentiousness, he wondered if there would be any value in making an anthology of the ponderous thoughts which keep men com-

pany when they are alone. Swimming seemed to bring them out in him as heat brings out a rash. A man was lucky if once in his lifetime his thoughts threw up unconsciously one well-turned epigram.

He heard the dull rattle of an oar dropping on to bottom boards and looking up he saw that one of the boats had drifted towards him. He pushed the loose hair back from his forehead, watching the phosphorescence drop from his arm, and trod water as the black shape of the boat moved gently down upon him. When it was a few yards from him he turned on his side and struck out to move clear of its way. As he did so a voice called softly and he thought he heard his own name. He stopped swimming and the voice came across to him gently.

"Signore. Signore Hudson."

The boat came nearer and now he saw, rising from its low silhouette, the solitary plug of a man's form standing in the bows. Behind him was the dark shadow of another man seated in the stern.

"Signore . . ." The sound was touched with a gruff urgency, pitched low, almost a whisper.

Hudson swam forward close to the boat. He raised a hand and drifted, fending himself from the side.

"What do you want?"

"Signore Hudson?"

"Yes. How do you know my name?"

The man looked down at Hudson and in the starlight and the pale luminosity from the phosphorescence that washed away from the boat's side Hudson saw his face. For a moment he was back in his childhood, in his aunt's house, lying in bed and staring at a painting of the Last Supper. Most of the apostles had faces like this one, long and bearded and with an air of stern good-humor. The man couched himself against the gunwale and the loose linen coat he wore swung open to show his bare hairy chest.

"Signore Hudson, it is very important . . ." He spoke with an Italian inflexion, a voice which was strong, authoritative even in a whisper. "You must swim to the island. Over there—" He pointed through the darkness to the island about a hundred yards away. "There is a white stone. Swim there."

Hudson stared up at him, frowning.

"What the devil's all this about?" He dropped away from the boat, and the man leaned over, reaching out one arm towards him and motioning it towards the island as though by the action he would in some way speed him on.

"It is very important . . . Signore." Then with a chuckle he drew back and the boat, moving on the drift between island and main shore, dropped away.

Hudson started to swim slowly towards the island, keeping before him the pale shape of the stone which had been white-washed to serve as some channel mark for the fishermen. In a few minutes he felt the first touch of weeds and then his feet brushed roughly against an underwater boulder. He held himself flat, paddling forward gently like a dog until he could get a hold on the first of a jumbled pile of rocks which marked the shore. He drew himself up, stood with the water dripping from him and then, with a shake of his head to clear the water from his face, stepped forward from rock to rock towards the white stone, which stood at the edge of the thick border of scrub behind the beach.

A yard from the stone he paused. Shadowed against its near side was the figure of a man. He leaned with one elbow on a spur of the stone and waited for Hudson. Then, as though impatient, when Hudson made no move, the shadow detached itself from the rock and came forward. A voice said—"Catch" and a raincoat was thrown towards him. Hudson took the coat and slipped it over his shoulders and the movement was accomplished in a queer state of mental nullity. In a moment, he knew his heart would begin to race,

and with that would come a familiar control, a refusal to acknowledge shock.

"I'm sorry to do it this way. There are cigarettes and matches in the coat pocket, but don't use them until we get into the scrub." The words finished in a half-laugh, a gentle note of embarrassment, almost apology, and with the movement the man lifted his face a little and the starlight showed the familiar features of Raikes. The moment Hudson had heard the voice say "Catch" he had known it, and now to cover a mixture of gladness and anger, he found himself saying—

"You'll be glad to hear we gave you a respectable funeral."

Raikes laughed again, this time with some return of his old assurance, and he took Hudson by the arm. "Moments like this are very awkward. When the day of resurrection comes people will stand about and look at one another and wonder what to do next. Believe me, I've been standing here like a scared schoolboy for the last half-hour."

Hudson moved forward towards the scrub with him.

"From the raincoat and the cigarettes, I gather you've got a lot of explaining to do."

"I have. We'll do it over a drink."

Raikes paused as they entered the scrub and faced Hudson. Then he said very simply—"Thank you, Hudson."

"For what?"

"For taking it the way I expected you would."

"Don't overestimate me. I'm not going to believe it until you produce the drink. Then I'll know you're really alive."

Without a word Raikes turned and began to follow a small track through the juniper and low oaks. As they crested a small rise Hudson saw a long finger of searchlight flash out from the far end of the island on the seaward side. Its beam dragged across the water in a semicircle, paused and then swept back. Over his shoulder Raikes said quietly—"There's an army post at the far end of the island."

They dropped down the side of a small slope and stopped outside a log hut built back into the fall of the ground. Raikes entered and Hudson followed. The door was closed. Hudson heard the scratch of a match and in the small gleam saw Raikes move to a table and light a couple of candles stuck in bottles. The light wavered for a moment, reluctant, feeble, then gathered strength and burned up clear and strong and the details of the hut came forward from the shadows.

"Welcome to Liberty Hall." Raikes hooked a stool forward to the table and, as Hudson sat down, reached for a bottle from the window shelf and poured a couple of drinks. He sat down at the other end of the table, raised his glass and they drank. Hudson put down his glass.

"Whiskey?"

"Yes. There's still some about—if you know the right people."

"If you want the good things in life it's important to know the right people."

"Sometimes, just to stay alive, it's important to know them."

Hudson smiled. "I prefer it if you begin at the beginning and go straight on."

"It's difficult."

"I'm a patient listener."

"I want your help."

"Begin at the beginning."

"I'm only going to tell you as much as you need to know. If anything goes wrong . . . then what you don't know you can't tell."

"That seems logical."

"It's practical, too. Every country in the world has means of making men speak. What they don't know they can't tell." He was silent for a moment, finishing his drink. "Listen, I spent a great deal of my boyhood on this coast. My

father—he was a London wine importer—had a summer house on one of the islands. I speak the language like my own and I have friends in the country. One of them is in Dubrovnik—the fisherman who spoke to you just now. During the war I was up and down this coast on Naval Intelligence. This fisherman, Sandro, worked for us—he still does. But now he's had enough. You can only carry on so long. Now, he's going back to Italy. That's where he came from. I'm not a Board of Trade Official, but I do have a semiofficial government position."

Hudson filled his glass as Raikes paused waiting for his reaction. Half-a-dozen small memories from their days in Belgrade came into his mind. "It's a nice way of putting it. Go on."

"I came to this country with you for two reasons, one because we like to make a legitimate entry and exit if we can, and two, because when we heard Sandro was getting out we hoped it would be possible for him to take someone else with him. I was given the job of arranging for that person to go with Sandro."

"And this someone else?"

"All I can tell you, and it's all you need to know, is that it is someone at the Hotel Argentina. What I want you to do is to pass a message from me when the time comes, explaining how the escape is to be made. After that you can forget the whole business."

Raikes paused to drain his glass and Hudson could see that for all his outer calm he was enjoying himself. His own feelings he held firmly in check until the confusion should have cleared.

"You're not telling the story very well. It's gappy. Who was it that was killed by a land-mine, and why couldn't you have stayed alive to pass the message yourself?"

"The man who was killed was Luca—one of Sandro's sons. We were boys together and we were often taken for brothers

. . . I'm sorry about Luca but it was one of those damned things. He came out to meet me with a message from Sandro. He swam ashore from his boat and as he was going back to the beach . . . it happened. While I was in Belgrade I'd learned from our people that OZNA had probably got wind of my real business—so, I decided to die. You saw the body?"

"Yes."

"It wasn't difficult to arrange. Luca and I were much the same build, same hair. So I smashed up my watch and put it on him and then I swam out to his boat. When you're dead you get a great deal more freedom in a country like this. I live out here undisturbed. They don't allow tourists on the island and Sandro and I meet at night. As soon as the escape is organized the only job left is to pass the message. When the time comes I'll give you something which will make recognition easy. Agents, you know, often work in the dark. All I know is that this person is at the hotel and that three governments, including our own, are determined to see that the escape comes off. If anything goes wrong that person won't give OZNA a chance to make him speak."

"A very important person."

Raikes nodded. "So important that they haven't even trusted me with full details."

Hudson stood up and moved slowly to the window which was blocked with a sack. The hut held only a table and two stools and in one corner a pile of blankets neatly folded. The neatness was unlike Raikes, though he realized now that underneath the outer untidiness and sprawling good humor of the man there must be a shrewd intelligence. He looked from the blankets to Raikes and then he said quietly—

"Why were you so sure that I would help you?"

Raikes swung round, puzzled, but before he could reply there was a sound from outside, the slip of heavy shoes over a loose patch of stones and then the deliberate sound of foot-

steps on the sandy turf outside the hut. Hudson stepped back into the corner of the hut, facing the door.

"It's all right. It's Yelitsa. She brings me food twice a day." Before he could say more the door opened and a girl came into the hut. She wore a red scarf drawn over her dark hair and held a paper parcel cradled in her arms, pressed against the stiff blue and white cloth of her dress, to the bosom of which was pinned a cameo brooch showing the head of Mercury. She looked at Raikes and then from him to Hudson. For a moment, in the soft candlelight, her eyes watched them both, dark, sullen eyes, and the face which had a broad, peasant beauty was marked with a faint resentment.

"There is only bread and salad and beetroots." She put the parcel on the table and turned to go.

"Thank you, Yelitsa."

The girl shrugged her shoulders and went out.

"Pleasant girl."

"She's Sandro's daughter-in-law. The old palace on the island which was built by Maximilian is now an orphanage. She works in the kitchen there. She never says much. She was very fond of Luca, and in a way I suppose she feels I'm responsible for his death."

"Was he her husband?"

"No. There's another son, Tulio. They've been married three years." Raikes pulled the parcel to him and began to eat. His mouth full of beetroot he looked up at Hudson. "Why shouldn't I be sure you would help me?"

"You've only known me a few weeks. How did you know I'd take the risk? I've got my firm's contract to think of if anything went wrong. I also have a high personal regard for my own safety."

"I know your war record. I know all about the prison escapes you organized, and I also know why you never escaped

yourself. I learned as much as I could about you before I ever saw you—"

"Because you thought you might need my help?"

"No. Because I like to be informed about my travelling companions. I never contemplated asking you to help until I saw poor old Luca lying on the beach . . . then I saw how I could go underground so long as you would do one very simple thing for me. You don't want me to go into heroics, do you? To talk about liberty, and the fight against tyranny . . . ? You've seen this country. All you've got to do is to pass one simple message . . . Let's face it, Hudson, you know damn well you'll do it."

"Go to hell!" He came back towards Raikes and stood over him, lighting a cigarette.

Raikes went on. "You don't want to be too long away from the hotel. You're a creature of habits—that's how I knew that I could get in touch with you. Don't break any of the habits."

Hudson sat down and leaned his elbows on the table. "I want an answer to some questions." The decision to help had been taken a long time ago, now there was an automatic consideration of detail, the return of an old delight in planning.

"Go ahead."

"If you've taken Luca's place—how is it that friends and neighbors will not miss the real Luca from wherever he lived?"

"Luca was a rolling stone. He'd only been back in Dubrovnik three days before he was killed. He was working on the Youth railway up at Sarajevo. Luca comes and goes. For the moment, he's gone."

"How is the escape to be done?"

"You don't have to know that."

"When then?"

"In a week, maybe longer."

"How will you give me the message for whoever it is at the hotel?"

"Each night Sandro goes out with the sardine boats. They always light up at the same time. When I want you he'll cover and uncover his light three times, just after it's lit. Watch for it. Then swim out here within the hour."

"Just how much about you and this affair does the Yugoslav Department for the Defense of the People know?"

Raikes smiled. "OZNA? I'd be a happy man if I knew. At a guess I should think they know a little less than you. They think I'm dead. They know what I was, and they know somebody is wanting to get away. They may even know that that somebody is at the hotel, but I doubt it."

Hudson was silent for a while. For all his intelligence, Raikes was a romantic—when Luca had been killed he had been unable to resist the romantic gesture. Any police department which suspected Raikes would surely check the identity of the body carefully. Hudson knew that it was a step he would never have taken.

"You seem certain that they won't suspect you're still alive?"

"They may, but I think not. Anyway I had to disappear. Another day and they would probably have taken me into protective custody. That would have ruined everything. Somebody in OZNA had got to know too much. I had to disappear."

"If things went wrong, completely wrong . . . what help would you or I get from the Embassy at Belgrade?"

Raikes smiled and sliced a beetroot in half. "The answer to that, Hudson, is two words of one syllable, a phrase common to both of us as ex-officers. Have another drink before you go?"

"No thanks. I've been away too long."

Hudson rose. Raikes followed him to the door.

"Enjoy your bed at nights and think of me on the floor."

Hudson glanced at the pile of blankets in the corner of the hut.

"Who folds your blankets in the morning? Yelitsa?"

"No. I do it myself."

"You're a very tidy person—when you're working."

"You notice too much." He paused for a moment, and then went on with a surprising note of sincerity in his voice, the approach almost of sentiment. "I'm very grateful to you . . . and so will a lot of others be, I hope."

Hudson laughed gently, fending off the discomfort which always touched him when people showed too clearly their emotions. "It's not my fault, is it, if I happen to like jigsaw puzzles. I'll leave your coat by the stone. You can pick it up later." He felt Raikes touch his arm and then he was out in the darkness moving through the bushes back to the sea.

He slipped in and began to swim quietly towards the hotel. The channel was a good three hundred yards broad and he took his time, not because he wanted to think, but more because he wanted a period by himself in which he could deliberately turn away from thinking. His excitement bared by the challenge to step outside the ordinary limits of daily routine, had to be held back so that the mind should become free for thought which would owe nothing to any extravagance of spirit. He swam on, watching the colored lights along the hotel terrace grow clearer, strung like a cheap necklace across the dusky bosom of the shadowed slope.

Given any other approach Zarko felt that, after a moment's natural chagrin, he might have freely added his own admiration to this man's triumph. His respect for the other's intelligence was now confirmed, though this in no way made him suspect his own stupidity—it was merely that the other had started with an advantage which he could not possess. The phrase "There is no doubt" hung before him like the taunt of a red cloak to draw him on, and he knew that because of

his nature, but more because of the other man's nature, he would have to challenge it.

Lepovitch was sitting on the arm of the leather chair beyond the desk. His hands were in his pockets and his lean body had lost some of its stiffness, as though in his triumph he could afford to relax some of his defenses against this man who was so obviously his inferior in intellect.

"There is no doubt," Lepovitch repeated the phrase, and his dry delight in it was carried in the voice woundingly, "and I am surprised that the facts should have escaped a man who holds your position. One of the responsibilities of public position today is eternal vigilance. The State has so many enemies."

Zarko got up to ease the disturbance in his stomach and while he prepared his defense, found part of his mind making again the old resolution to confine himself at supper to one plate of soup. He went to the mantel shelf and touched one of the calceolaria blooms tentatively, holding the spotted lip down. Then he turned.

"The responsibilities of my position have nothing to do with it! This man Raikes was a guest in our country to whom I had to be courteous because of the value of his contract. I don't have to tell you how valuable that contract still is. Your advantage was that you came knowing that he was an agent. So you saw more than I did. The question of intelligence or extra vigilance doesn't enter into it."

Lepovitch realized the truth in the defense, but he had no intention of acknowledging it.

"We shall gain nothing by arguing that point. More important now is how we are to proceed." He stood and walking up and down began to marshal the parade of details and possibilities and he felt a familiar cold rush of excitement rising in him, the pure pleasure which springs from a mind feeding on a problem that challenges both imagination and intellect. "Raikes we know is not dead. Somebody else was

killed by the land-mine. At this moment Raikes is in or near Dubrovnik." He paused and looked at Zarko. "We share now all the facts, all the suspicions, and neither of us possesses an advantage over the other . . ."

This Zarko knew was another challenge. The race would begin without handicap on either side. Let's see who would win. Lepovitch had no doubt of the result.

"True." Zarko was cautious.

"This man Hudson. You've spoken to him. Do you think he genuinely believes that Raikes was dead?"

Zarko recalled Hudson in this office. "I'm sure of it."

Lepovitch laughed. "I'm not. What would be easier than for Raikes to disappear and this, apparently, innocent companion to carry on with such part of Raikes' work as he felt wise to delegate to him. Doesn't it strike you as odd that two men, friendly, working on the same contract, should be unaware of the real truth about one another? I think it's more than likely that they are both agents."

"I don't think so."

"Why not?"

Zarko had forgotten his animosity now. His mind held place only for the succession of probabilities and, if his mind worked with less precision than Lepovitch's, it did have the advantage of an understanding of the frailty of human nature. "Hudson is a highly specialized engineer. He comes from a famous English firm and he is here to provide us with mining equipment which we badly need. Raikes was an agent—but that doesn't prove that Hudson's one."

Lepovitch was at the window, looking out across the lighted house fronts, feeling on his face the warm air of the night. "So you think we shouldn't bother with him?"

"He must be watched, of course, but it must be done in a very careful way. If he is innocent and we handle him wrongly and he causes trouble both you and I will hear something from the Ministry of National Economy. You know

what a blunder like that would mean, Comrade Lepovitch . . ." Zarko paused, enjoying himself, for he knew where this man's fundamental loyalty lay . . . "the end of your career—"

Lepovitch swung round, his face taut. "And yours!" he snapped.

"Quite. But I can always go back to the wheelwright trade my father taught me. What have you got behind you?"

Lepovitch knew the man was laughing at him, and he knew too that there was nothing behind him, nothing to which he would want to go back. He escaped now in a return to professional competence.

"Then he must be handled carefully. That is your business. Put your men on him, put them on the business of this unknown body we've buried with all the archaic honors of a half-dead religion, and when we have facts I shall know what to do."

Zarko nodded. He took the *rakia* bottle from his desk drawer and set two glasses. As he poured the first one, he said gently—"Don't worry about Mr. Hudson. I know exactly how to handle him. In fact I'm looking forward to it. Will you have a drink?"

Lepovitch picked up his hat from the chair and moved to the door. "No. I still have some work to do."

Zarko raised his glass. "So have I, but I find a glass of *rakia* at this time of night clears my thoughts. You're a young man, you don't need such stimulants. Good night."

Lepovitch gave a half-grunt in return and went out, pulling the door sharply after him. Zarko sat back with the glass and chuckled. The man was dangerous and he was clever, but he had his weaknesses and, since he chose to be unpleasant, he had no compunction about playing on them. He looked up at the portrait of Tito. He thought, with quite a different direction of emotion: because one man is great, because the idea which inspired a country is right, it would

be unreasonable to expect that greatness and idealism from all men.

In his room at the Hotel Imperial Lepovitch wrote up his daily report. He wrote rapidly, but carefully, forgetful of the cigarette on his ashtray which slowly smoldered down to a tiny grey trunk.

. . . and a detailed examination of the body immediately established the fact. Due to excessive mutilation a comparison of the features with the passport photograph was impossible. Raikes was a man from whom one would expect a normal standard of cleanliness. The toe- and fingernails of the body were very dirty, an ingrained dirt such as one might expect from a workman. In addition, the skin under the wrist watch strap had the same tone of sunburn as the rest of the arm. Any man who wears a watch habitually, as Raikes must have done, would have had a whiter line of skin under the strap . . .

. . . steps are now being taken to trace Raikes, establish the identity of the dead body, and to watch the remaining Englishman, Hudson. In my opinion I am inclined to think that he is, and has been, actively concerned in this mission with Raikes, but at this point owing to the high industrial importance of his position in this country, I have given the strictest injunctions that he is to be handled with care. In the meantime I should appreciate any information you can obtain about him, even if it is only the official information contained in his London visa application . . . I should like the dossiers of the guests now at the Hotel Argentina. The man we want may well be among them. The importance of this affair justifies this step, even though one is a foreign national and two others persons to whose names I do not for a moment attach anything but the highest respect. The records of the hotel staff and servants will be checked from the Bureau of the People's Militia here. The hotel guests are:—

1. Lieutenant Colonel Ilyra Grol. Ministry of War, Belgrade. Identity Reg. No. Belgrade. WL.874329.
2. Dr. Jan Brussiak. Polish National from Wroclau. Loaned

to Ministry of Agriculture by Polish Government in connection with re-establishment of viniculture and anti-phylloxera research on certain Dalmatian islands.

3. Irinej Ransko (with wife, Leska, and two children, Madeo and Stanye). Shipwright from Split. Political Commissar in People's Shipyard. Vacationing under workers' high production category system. Identity Reg. No. Split. OP. 54911368.
4. Drava Sumitch, and wife Maria. Zagreb. Tanjug news agency. Sub-editor. Honeymoon. Special category reservation as Political Commissar Journalists' Association, and as author "Red Star of the Mountains." Identity Reg. No. Maribor. S.7263195.
5. Zarija Djilas. Belgrade. House of Representatives deputy. Identity Reg. No. Rijeka. S.49498103.

. . . In view of my original comment on Vladimir Zarko, it should be pointed out that while all the facts at my disposal were equally available to him, he lacked the requisite vigilance and intelligence to make the same use of them. There are some men who, having fought well in the great struggle against fascism, and having been rewarded, are content to live on their past glories. Contentment is the first sign of a reactionary disposition . . .

He paused. What he had said about Zarko was enough for the moment to satisfy his personal dislike of the man. Further he could not go without facts. In this business no one was trusted. At this moment Zarko might be reporting on him.

His report finished, he made a copy of it for his file, and then sat down to write to his wife, who was in a People's Sanatarium in the Kozara Mountains. The expression on his face, his manner of writing, were quite different, for he loved his wife. She had been in the Sanatarium now for over a year, and in all that time he had only seen her twice. He wrote until long after midnight.

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DAY FOUR

The embrasures in the battlements of the fortress block which, housing now the museum, formed the southern tip of the encircled little harbor, made very good seats. Hudson sat with his back against the warm biscuit-colored stones, his feet swinging free over the two-hundred-foot drop to the tiny mole below, which ran out to the sea like a stiffly pointed index finger. There was a small breeze to temper the rising morning heat, and perched aloft he was enjoying for a while the pleasure of looking down on the city and the harbor with a sense of idle omnipotence. If one had the energy, it would be easy to reach out and rearrange the muddled sprawl of cream and pink houses into neat formations up the grey-stoned hill slopes. A white schooner was lying at an awkward angle against the inner quayside. The touch of a finger would bring it into line and restore a geometrical nicety to the harbor boats. He heard someone coming up the steep steps that led to the flat fortress top.

"Good morning, Mr. Hudson. I was told I should find you here."

Zarko was standing behind him, his face perspiring a little from his climb, his panama hat held in his hands to let the breeze play across his short hair, the trousers of his white linen suit drawn tightly up as though some invisible power were holding him by his braces, keeping him upright. The iron grey eyes were laughing.

"I have to talk to you and I thought it might be pleasanter

to do it somewhere where we were completely alone. Perhaps I should tell you that since you left your hotel this morning you have been followed."

Hudson slipped his legs inside the embrasure and helped himself to a cigarette from the packet which Zarko proffered. When he was smoking, he said quietly, watching Zarko's face, "By a thin fellow in a grey striped flannel suit, blue tie, a patch on the upper of his right brown shoe, and not the slightest interest in art?"

Zarko half-bowed. "Exactly." And as he said it, his heart was full of a strange warmth. No matter what this man might or might not be, he had the kind of humor and unsurprised intelligence which appealed to him.

Hudson nodded. "He was hovering around while I looked at the Ragusianos in the Duomo; the architecture of the Rector's Palace fidgeted him and he was frankly bored by Onofrio's fountain. He was so obviously out of place that I knew he must have other interests."

"Did you mind?"

"Why should I? Practically every foreigner who comes to this country is watched by the police. It would be rude of me to object to a custom so well established. But it does make me curious."

"Why?"

"I should like to know the reason why the process had been delayed until today. Until now I've been left alone. When a man loses a privilege he has a right to know why it has been withdrawn."

Zarko laughed, a private inner chuckle which arose not from what Hudson said, but from the fleeting thought of what Lepovitch's reaction would be if he could have been present now. He replaced his panama and then, tucking his hands up under his armpits so that his elbows protruded like the stumpy wings of a fledgling, he began to pace gently up

and down, casting a glance at Hudson now and again as he spoke.

"Do you mind, Mr. Hudson, if I make a speech?"

Hudson smiled. "My experience of men who start with that phrase is that no matter if anyone else does mind they'll still make the speech. Go ahead."

"Very well. Mr. Hudson, I don't know what your politics are, but I'm prepared to believe that you are quite sincere about them. I should like to think that in return you would grant me the same degree of sincerity. I am a Communist. Yugoslavia is a Communist country. I believe, Mr. Hudson, that in Communism lies her true destiny, that it is the only system which will give us those things which all men desire."

"Of course, you know, I think you are mistaken?"

"Maybe, but my belief and the belief of thousands like me is the important thing. There are governments who can't tolerate our belief, Mr. Hudson, and they work against us in our own country. It is part of my duties to expose such activities. At times circumstances force us to use methods which seem harsh, but our justification is that no system is perfect. We must protect what we cherish with the weapons at hand. Later on, the practices which are forced on us now will happily become redundant, but until that moment we believe that the importance of the individual is of little weight."

"I'm not going to argue. This is your speech. But some other time I could debate that point with you."

"I'm going to be very frank with you. Your friend Raikes was a British agent . . ." He paused, but the other was leaning back against the stones watching him with an expression of quiet attention.

"Really?"

"More than that. Your friend Raikes is not dead. It was not his body which was buried."

"How do you know this?" The natural surprise in Hudson's voice served him better than any premeditated reaction.

"I cannot give details. But it is so. Where he is at this moment we do not know. But we shall find out. You will appreciate, Mr. Hudson, that we cannot overlook the chance that you, too, may be a British agent."

Hudson laughed. "Why don't you ask me the question frankly?"

"Mr. Hudson—you know perfectly well it would be idle. If you are innocent you will say No. And if you're guilty you will say No."

Hudson nodded. "Since the answer won't help you, I won't give it. But there is one point I would like cleared up. Why am I getting this special treatment?"

"Because you are a special person, Mr. Hudson. You will be watched, but if you are innocent you can do exactly as you choose and no one will annoy you."

"It's rather hard on the man who follows me, isn't it?"

Zarko chuckled. "He'll be relieved by others, and anyway it will do him good to learn something about his own town." He paused and then went on swiftly, the words thrusting at Hudson with a quiet menace. "But if you're guilty, Mr. Hudson—much as I like you—don't think that my personal regard for you will influence your treatment. In some ways, perhaps, it might be better if you left Dubrovnik."

As Zarko spoke, Hudson found himself thinking that Raikes really had been untidy in his romantic attitude towards distant risks. The substitution of bodies had worried him when Raikes had told his story. More than ever now he had to help him, and it was not going to be easy against as shrewd a man as Zarko. He flicked his cigarette over the battlements.

"You know the English better than that, I think. We're a pigheaded race. As you say, you mustn't annoy me. Not, at least, until the contract details are finished. I'm a partner in our firm. I could easily make things very awkward . . ." He waved a hand easily as he saw Zarko stir. "No, no . . . I'm

not even vaguely annoyed. I'm just making your own point for you. In the meantime, I intend to stay in Dubrovnik."

"In that case, would you mind handing over your passport to me? When you are ready to leave it will be returned."

"Of course not." Hudson took his passport from his inner pocket and handed it to Zarko, who stood for a moment flipping its pages.

A point of awkwardness threatened to interpose itself for the first time between them, and as though they both recognized a common obligation to avoid it, they turned and moved together across the flat roof-top to the head of the steps.

Zarko slipped the passport into his pocket. "You've been very reasonable about this. Thank you, Mr. Hudson." Then, as they came down to the parapet, with a broad smile, dismissing everything which had passed between them, Zarko went on—"One night you must come and have dinner at my house. I have a small daughter who is learning English at the Gymnasium. She would welcome the opportunity to plague you with it."

Hudson laughed, accepting the invitation, and then watched the rotund, jerky figure move away down the walk towards the town. Then he turned and strolled across to a man who sat on the wall outside the entrance to the Museum. He looked bored, disinterested, staring down his crossed legs at the patch on his right shoe.

Hudson stood above him, but the man did not raise his face.

"I'm going through the town to the Bank to cash a traveller's cheque, then I'm walking back to the hotel along the footpath above the town. I thought you'd like to know our program."

The man made no reply. Hudson moved off towards the town and as he went down the steps to the harbor side, the

man raised himself slowly from the wall and began to follow him.

The rowboat bringing Yelitsa Venetti from Lokrum swung alongside the harbor steps. As she stepped out, she saw Hudson walk along the quayside past the fish market stalls. With resentful eyes, she followed his slow, easy movement as he disappeared into the thin crowd and through the narrow archway abutting the Rector's Palace. She hated Englishmen.

Over the heads of the few people who were standing at his little stall buying fish, Sandro saw Yelitsa come towards him. For a moment their eyes met and he knew that everything was all right. Ignoring the other women, he wrapped some fish in an old copy of the *Narodne List* and handed the parcel to Yelitsa as she came to the end of the table.

"Tulio is at home. He has had the old pains again—" He smacked with one hand against the loose folds of his blue shirt, and the brown leonine face crinkled into a smile above the thick beard. "Give him something good to eat."

"Tulio eats too much." She took the parcel and turned away, going through the archway into the main piazza and along the wide *stradone* towards the far end of the town. She turned left and mounting a long flight of shallow, cobbled steps came out into a small square in front of a church at the top of the rise. The square was hard, pressed earth and a few young children played in it. She turned down the Ulica Jesac, a narrow alleyway, darkened by the houses that towered along it, steep cliff sides of flaking plaster and paint, and jutting balconies crowded with lines of drab washing and plants growing in old tins.

The Venetti family lived in a four-room flat at the top of one of the houses. Yelitsa went up the dark stairs and let herself in to the main room which was living room and kitchen. Its one window looked out at the bare wall of the opposite

house. The light was feeble, its strength filtered through the growth of plants on the balcony.

Tulio was sitting at the wooden table, his feet on a chair, one hand scratching at the stubble on his chin as he read a coverless book.

"Yelitsa!" He was surprised. "You were coming tomorrow." He got up slowly.

"The Superintendent altered the days."

She put the fish down on the table and slipped the shawl from her shoulders. As she dropped it to a chair Tulio took her by the shoulders and kissed her. She knew what he wanted but made no move to recognize it. After a moment she pulled away from him. Without a word she began to unfasten the cloth bundle she had brought. Tulio leaned against the wall by the charcoal range and watched her. He was a heavy-faced man of about forty, blue-jowled and with a thin, overgrown body. Tulio read every paper, every book he could get, but he was stupid—the words, the information, went into him and disappeared.

Yelitsa brought out four eggs, a piece of bacon, a bottle of olive oil, some pimento and a slab of bread which, although not white, was whiter than any bread the townspeople could buy.

Tulio came to the table. "They eat well at the orphanage. It's a pity we couldn't arrange to be orphans."

"The children of fallen partisans have a right to it." She said it curtly.

"All children have a right to it."

"Do you want to eat . . . now?" When they had first married—after Luca had gone away—it had given her pleasure to serve him. He was always hungry, for food and for her, and some primitive response in her had always found her ready to satisfy him. When Luca had come back Tulio had been too stupid to see the reluctance in her.

"For the food, there's no hurry. But I'm hungry." He

laughed as he said it, and reached out for her. The hard stubble of his chin pressed against her cheek as he rubbed his face against her and she felt the tips of his teeth close gently on her ear. She held herself against it and caught at his hand as it reached across her body. Tulio picked her up suddenly. As his hand slipped to a hold against the warm flesh of her leg, he laughed.

"Yelitsa . . . What's the matter? Aren't you hungry, too?"

With his hand on her, the stale smell of tobacco and fish from his clothes touching her nostrils with a new repugnance, she knew she had to have time . . . time for something which had taken possession of her mind. She bit his shoulder through the cloth of his coat and he dropped her, standing back. Something in his manner, the hurt expression of a small boy suddenly withheld from pleasure made her laugh and through her laughter she said hoarsely, "The Superintendent chose the wrong day. If you are hungry then you must eat. It is not my fault."

Tulio looked at her stupidly for a moment, and then as he understood he swore. He turned away and kicked childishly at the chair by the table.

"Go out and get a drink. While you're gone I will cook."

He picked up his book and a cloth cap and stood for a moment at the door. He smiled at her, his disappointment accepted stoically.

"When we get to Italy, you'll stay at home."

He went out and she turned to the preparation of the food. But in her movement from the fireplace to the sink against the window wall, her eye was caught by a plush-framed family group: Sandro and his now dead wife, Carlotta, and the two boys; Tulio with his dark hair plastered across his forehead in a cowlick and Luca with one hand holding a sailboat. She stared at the photograph, at Luca, as though for a moment she felt she could get some response from him, but the round, unusually solemn face stared back at her without ex-

pression. Anger darkened her sullen eyes as she moved away.

When the Englishman had arrived, Sandro had decided to go back to Italy. She had never wanted to go. This was her country, she was happy here—but Luca wanted to go. Because of him, she had been willing to go, too. Once in Italy, Luca would take her away from Tulio for good. But now Luca was dead, and the simple emotional demands of her nature determined what she would do: Luca's death should be revenged. This done, then the whole business of a flight to Italy would be stopped. Sandro and Tulio would never know the truth, but they would stay here, and in time—the working logic of her peasant mind faced the future frankly—Luca would be a memory and she would be content with what Tulio could offer.

She went into her bedroom and from a box in the yellow wardrobe took out a packet of cheap blue letter paper, a pen, and a bottle of ink. She put them on the small bamboo table by the window, rolling back the white, lace-edged cloth in case she spilled ink. Very deliberately, and with a concentration and stiff dedication of the whole of her body, for this was no easy exercise to her, she began to write, disguising her hand as best as she could. ". . . the Englishman is not dead. He is hiding in Lokrum in a hut at the north end." When she had finished she sealed the note into an envelope and returned the materials to the wardrobe. Then she slid the envelope into the top of her thick black stockings, pinning it safely through the paper to the thick selvage that stretched around her thigh. As she went out into the main room she heard the heavy step of Sandro coming up the stairs.

Hudson and Franja spent the afternoon together on the town beach, a narrow curve of sand below the coast road where it ran out from the Ploce Gate. The beach was divided into a reserved section, served by a bathing establishment and a café, and a small charge was made for entrance; the other

part of the beach was free. Hudson noticed as he lay on the sand with Franja that his follower had gone into the free section and was sitting with his jacket and shoes off, casting an occasional glance at the privileged classes on the other side of the wire fence.

Before Franja's arrival he had debated whether he should tell her that he was being followed, and give her the chance to withdraw from the meeting. But when he saw her she had so obviously decided to enjoy herself that he had no heart to spoil her pleasure. They swam, lay in the sunshine and talked, and he found himself in the presence of quite a different personality. She was friendly, gay and with a quick, natural enthusiasm. He liked the boyish directness with which she treated him, getting up when she was too hot and running to the sea without a glance to see whether he was following after her remark "It's hot—I'm going to swim." He followed the slim, well-formed figure in its green bathing dress, and they swam out to the raft. By the time they had walked back to the hotel and had their tea, a quick friendliness existed between them.

As she left him, she said, "Well, if Comrade Zarko calls me to his office and tells me I'm being too friendly—at least he can't take away this afternoon. I've enjoyed myself."

"Do you think he will?"

She shook her head. "Someone will tell him. This town is full of eyes and mouths and ears. But I don't care. Now I must hurry or I shall be late for the orchestra."

She was gone, her white skirt swinging, and Hudson found himself holding down a moment of savageness that such simple pleasure must be taken only in a spirit of rebellion.

Later, before dinner, he was still thinking about her when he went down to the palm walk to smoke a cigarette in the cool and to keep an eye open for a possible signal from Raikes. He found Dr. Brussiak sitting on the low wall of the palm garden overlooking the swimming place.

Brussiak looked around as he heard the *slap* of Hudson's loose sandals across the concrete path. The end of his cigarette glowed suddenly as he drew at it and the pale circle of his face was held for a moment against the shadows, the thick lenses of his glasses circled momentarily with a red reflection. Then as the glow subsided he was a hunched patch of darkness lined against the ripple-edged spread of the sea below. As Hudson passed him the man spoke in English.

"Mr. Hudson. May I speak with you?"

Hudson lit his cigarette before answering. Outside the hotel he was being watched, but Zarko would not ignore his life here, and that afternoon he had decided that either one of the guests or the servants would have been given the job. Momentarily he considered Dr. Brussiak in the rôle.

"Certainly."

"Forgive me . . . but I have a favor to ask you." There was a note of embarrassment in the man's voice.

"If I can help you—"

"At lunch today, you were reading a book. As I passed your table I saw what it was. I would . . ." The voice was hesitant. "I would very much like to borrow it . . . only for a little while."

Hudson laughed gently. "But of course. Are you so fond of Keats?"

The little hunched figured stirred.

"Very. But it is so hard to get English books now, and my own copy . . . I have lost somewhere long ago."

"I shouldn't have thought he was your poet. A man who could say—

> 'Hence Burgundy, Claret and Port;
> Away with old Hock and Madeira'—?"

Brussiak laughed, a low, guarded sound.

"Poets are seldom good judges of wine, Mr. Hudson."

"I'll bring it along to your room sometime."

"No, no, Mr. Hudson. Please do not do that. You understand . . . If you would just leave it on your table, say at dinner tonight, I would pick it up when you are gone . . ." With the embarrassment was now a note of apology for a state of affairs which needed no explanation between them.

"I understand. I'll leave it for you." Even as he spoke the man had slid off the wall and was moving slowly away. Hudson felt a rising anger against this country where even a simple favor had to be asked in a shadowed corner . . . And then his anger was gone. For all he knew, it might not have been a simple request. Someone in this hotel wanted to escape, someone in this hotel would be watching him . . . and who could tell which was which?

He sat on, smoking in the darkness. Near the island he heard the familiar, dulled sounds from the waiting fleet of boats and after a while the bow flares broke into life, but no signal came to him and finally he went to the hotel.

Before going down to dinner, he picked up the volume of Keats' poems. As he locked the door of his room, he wondered how long it would be before his room would be searched. Perhaps it already had been.

Joseph brought him his soup and as he ate he watched the other diners over the top of the poems propped against the water jug.

Colonel Grol was dining with some civilian guests from the town; the honeymoon couple were holding hands under the table as they waited for their fish; the severe-faced man in the white cap was picking his teeth; Brussiak was grunting at his book; and at the Ransko table Madeo had just upset a glass of water over his father's knees. Each table was a little island in the leafy-hung delta of the terrace, and there was no communication between them except the smooth black and white traffic of the impersonal waiters.

As he drank his coffee, Madeo swivelled in his chair and eyed him solemnly. Deliberately Hudson winked at Madeo

and then made a ferocious face. Madeo exploded into sound and movement. He gave a high crow of delight and wriggled from his chair swiftly. Before his father's hand could reach him he was trotting towards Hudson. He halted at the table, legs apart.

"Again."

Hudson shook his head.

"Your turn."

Madeo's eyes widened. Then he screwed up his face into a tight crinkled mask and stuck out his tongue.

"Madeo!"

Madeo was lifted by the slack of his rompers and carried off by his father, who gave Hudson an angry glance.

Later, as the Ransko family moved back into the hotel, the father came over to Hudson. He stood by the table, a thin, wispy creature, nervous but resolute, his Adam's apple moving slowly against the goose flesh of his long neck as he induced the effort to speak.

"Madeo is a difficult child. It would please me if you did not encourage him."

"I'm sorry." Hudson knew why the man had forced himself to protest. "I promise not to wink or make funny faces."

"Thank you." Ransko gave a stiff nod and turned away.

A little later, when he rose to go to his room, Hudson left the book of poems on his table. At the terrace door Joseph stood in his customary position watching the tables. Hudson gave him good-night, and as the waiter returned the salute he smiled and added, his dark eyes watching Hudson curiously—"Happy is he that is happy in his children."

"You're a philosopher as well as a magician, Joseph."

"The two qualifications of a good waiter, monsieur."

Up in his room Hudson lit a cigarette and went out on to the balcony. The night was cool and pleasant. On the seaward side of Lokrum the twin searchlight beams played gently over the sea. From the terraced gardens below rose

the scent of night flowers and above the dark patches of oleanders and azaleas a thin drift of fireflies hovered, winking and flashing in a slow rise and fall. Away to the left, where the headland ran out to the sea, the land was studded with a dull ocher of house lights and a few gardens away a pale blue radiance rose from the colored glass dome of a villa framed by the dark arabesques of pine trees.

It was a lovely country, but there was a shadow over most of the people. They had fought for this country; but Hudson felt that their victory had not brought them the freedom which they had hoped for. Of their two million war dead only eighteen thousand had been Communists. Of those who lived on how many, he wondered, shared the belief of Zarko, how many paid lip service and waited?

Lepovitch was still angry. And he knew that the anger was not entirely the result of disagreement with Zarko over policy. Zarko had told him that afternoon of the approach he had made to Hudson. It was something he would never have done himself and his first reaction had been anger. Now he was beginning to understand the real cause of his discomfort. Zarko was not as stupid as he had imagined, and his action had indicated a confidence which, he felt, might reach back to some foundation of certainty in his position which demanded more caution in dealing with the man. Zarko's sureness could only mean that Zarko probably had friends in authority who would back him, might mean in fact that he was receiving orders quite independently of Lepovitch. Handling this possibility made the composition of his report more difficult. He wrote slowly, assessing the weight and discretion of each paragraph.

. . . Zarko's line of approach, which at first may seem unusual, has certain advantages, although I am not sure it is the course I would have taken.

If Hudson is innocent, and we had watched him and he had discovered this, he would have had cause for annoyance which might have affected the successful completion of his commercial mission. We have been frank with him, and he has accepted this with a reasonableness which may be a cover for anything.

If he is guilty we gain the shock value of laying our cards before him, and making him take elaborate precautions which may hinder his plans, or cause him to change them. To change a plan in the middle of an operation, as necessarily detailed as this one must be, means inefficiency and weakness somewhere . . . It is for this that we wait.

Whenever Hudson leaves the hotel he is watched. A complete cover in the hotel has also been arranged. This morning I searched his room but I learned nothing from it of importance . . .

So far we have no lead on Raikes or the person he is supposed to contact here . . .

He pushed the report away, slipping back in his chair and staring out of the window. He had been circumspect. Whatever happened now, he could cover himself.

DAY FIVE

The friendliness in Zarko's voice was quite genuine.

"I'm not ordering you to do anything, mademoiselle. This is a request which the Republic has a right to make of any citizen." He paused, eyeing her for a moment with a gentle lift of one brow, humor wreathing his large mouth, and his tongue travelled caressingly along the inner line of his upper lip. It was a pleasure to have her in his office, lying back in the deep leather chair, not relaxed, but reserved, holding to herself some comment which he knew would never be released to him. "After all, I gather that you do not find his company exactly . . . repulsive."

Franja sat forward in the chair, resting her arms on the padded leather and holding her hands together for she knew that parted they would tremble. It was no good telling herself to be calm, that it meant nothing, that she had done nothing. When his note had been delivered asking her to call, she had felt the spirit drain from her.

"Was it arranged then—because of this—that I should meet him at lunch with Colonel Grol?"

Zarko shook his head. Few other women in her place would have put the question. He admired her for it, while he regretted the intransigence which it offered to authority, an intransigence unmerited in this instance.

"No, mademoiselle—believe me—if any arrangement had been made then circumstances and yourself have made it."

"What has he done?" Franja asked the question quietly,

her eyes following the line of the peasant design on the rug.

"Nothing."

"Then why?"

Zarko stood up and came round to her. He put a hand on her shoulder and he felt the stiffness of her muscles drawn back into themselves. He was sorry for her then and moved away.

"Relax," he said gently. "You've done nothing wrong, and I'm not asking you to do anything wrong. I shall be frank with you. Our country is young. It has many enemies. Any foreigner in this country is a subject of speculation. Personally, I like Mr. Hudson and I think he is innocent. But I should be a fool if I left it at that."

Franja stood up. She was angry now, and the anger gave her a calmness which steadied her and deceived Zarko. She liked Hudson and she had been happy with him, and his quick sympathy had awakened in her a romantic wishfulness which, in the quiet of her room, comforted her with girlish fancies.

"You want me to spy on him." Her anger left her voice untouched.

"It's an ugly phrase. No. I want you to go as you would wish to go with him. Now and again you can come in here and tell me what you talk about. That's all. But, of course—" He turned back to his desk, speaking without looking at her, for now he felt uneasy at the need for this shabby strategem. "—if he ever says or does anything which makes you suspicious, then it is your duty to inform me. That is the duty of every good comrade."

"Of course."

"But I hope the occasion will never arise. However," he came back now, smiling at her and his hand went to her elbow, moving with her towards the door, "I am very grateful to you for your sensible attitude. There is one thing, though."

"Yes." Franja waited, unwilling now to trust herself to

words, knowing that if she began to speak she might show her contempt and anger.

"Mr. Hudson may wonder at your freedom to be friendly. If so, you can say that, since Colonel Grol introduced you, you feel free to do as you wish. Mr. Hudson is a very intelligent person. He may even ask you if such an interview as this took place. I don't want Mr. Hudson, or anyone else, to know that you have spoken to me."

"I understand."

Outside, by herself in the passage, Franja paused. Her lips were set tightly, holding the tears which rose from disgust for what she had to do and regret for the shadow cast over her brief happiness.

Hudson paused at the top of the shallow steps leading to the dark arch of Sveti Jacov. Through the open door came the pungent smell of incense and in the far gloom he saw the glitter of the altar ornaments. He looked back across the wide street and saw that the man who had been following him all the morning was standing at a house corner studying a printed notice on the wall. He was a plump, mild-featured man who had followed him with the apologetic air of a spaniel, forbidden to come on the walk, yet lurking always a little way behind.

Hudson went into the church, turned abruptly into the nearest side chapel and waited. After a few moments the man came in, moved hesitantly down the aisle as his eyes went round the church, then seeing Hudson, dropped quietly on to a chair by one of the main pillars and sat forward with his head, half-bowed, his eyes shut in an attitude of prayer.

Hudson came out of the chapel and moved towards the altar. An attendant came up and offered to show him around but he shook his head. He moved behind the altar into the choir stalls and there found what he wanted. He sat down, took out his sketch book, and began to make a precise draw-

ing of the carved motif that ran along the front of the stalls. Once or twice he looked back at the man, an apathetic figure framed between the altar rails. When he had finished he stood up and was about to move back into the main transept when his eye was caught by a small door set in the thick buttress of wall behind the choir stalls. He moved over to it and glancing up the wall saw a series of thin window slots. He gave the door a push and it swung half open. The man still sat in his chair, his head a little lower, and Hudson guessed that the coolness of the church after the heat outside had lulled him to sleep. With a smile he slipped inside the door and made his way up the narrow curving stairs which, he guessed, led to the belfry. Halfway up he paused and looked down into the church from one of the window slots. The man was still sitting, but as Hudson watched he raised his head, blinked his eyes and realized he had been sleeping. He stood up and with a worried expression came forward towards the choir stalls, passing out of Hudson's view. For a moment Hudson waited and then he saw the man come back into view and hurry towards the main door and disappear. Hudson went up into the belfry. He came out under the great bell, in a little tower which gave him a view of the sloping town below. To his right the roofs of the houses on the rising slope abutted on to the church, leaning and crowding against it for company and support. A few feet below the level of the belfry the sharp spine of a roof ran away to the blank wall of a building which dominated the slope. It was the old palace in which the People's Militia had its headquarters, and above the pent of the roof where it met the palace wall he found himself looking at the outside of a small window which, he realized, belonged to Zarko's room.

His follower was in the street as he came out. He was looking down the street, his back to Hudson and the temptation was too much. Hudson gave a low whistle and the man

turned. The relief on his face was unmistakable. Hudson smiled as he passed.

"What would happen if I told Comrade Zarko you went to sleep on the job?"

The man, unsure whether he was serious or joking, stared after him stupidly.

That evening the signal came from Sandro. Hudson was sitting taking his dinner on the terrace when he saw it. He watched the bow flares of the sardine fleet come to life and then, after a few moments, he saw the light of the boat nearest the mainland go out three times.

Hudson finished his dinner without hurry and went up to his room. So far he had not discovered who might be watching him in the hotel. The receptionist he felt sure would have had instructions to mark his comings and goings, but the man's position prevented him from watching him about the hotel grounds. There was a young boy of about sixteen who moved about the hotel in dark trousers and a white jacket and seemed to combine the duties of errand boy, kitchen boy and general assistant to the waiters. Once or twice in the gardens Hudson had seen him busy feeding the caged rabbits, pulling lettuce or tidying a flower bed.

He slipped off his clothes and put on trunks. Then he pulled his clothes on over them and went slowly down to the terrace again. He had dined early and some of the guests were still eating. He crossed the terrace and dropped down the angled step flights to the gardens below. Above the bathing place was a terrace, broader than all the others. Its flower beds were studded with small cactus and great pads of geraniums, and it was dark from the overhang of the palms and a few tall pines which rose from its gravelled surface. Hudson went slowly to the far end of the walk and sat on the wall overlooking the rocks. From below the wall a tall agave thrust its stiff candelabra ten feet into the air and around its

base he could see the pale flicker of the long, pointed tongues of its leaves. He lit a cigarette and considered his situation. He had no intention of letting anyone know that he was going into the water. By slipping over the wall he could move in the shadowed security of the rocks to the foot of the garden of the adjoining villa. He had never seen any movement in the overgrown grounds and he felt he would be safe from observation there.

Before he had half-finished his cigarette, he saw the white patch of the boy's coat. He came down the last flight of steps hesitantly, then moved across to the wall at the far end of the walk. Hudson held his cigarette cupped in his hand and watched him. The boy looked over the wall and then came gently along its length towards Hudson where he sat quietly in the shadows. Hudson waited until the boy was a yard from him, and then he said suddenly—

"What are you looking for?"

The boy swung round, startled, and then laughed nervously.

"Oh—I beg your pardon . . ."

"What are you looking for?"

"Madame Sumitch thought she might have left her bag on the wall this afternoon. She sent me down to look. Has monsieur seen it by chance?" The voice was controlled, innocent.

"No."

The boy thanked him and went away. Hudson watched him go up the steps. He sat for fifteen minutes, and then he slipped quietly over the wall and made his way along the rocks. Fifty yards away he paused in the shade of a great fuchsia bush that sprawled over the garden wall of the next villa. He waited again for a while, watching the pale line of the distant wall, but there was no movement to be seen from it. Swiftly he undressed, rolled his clothes into a bundle and thrust them into the heart of the fuchsia bush. Then, keeping in the cover of the rocks, he dropped down into the

warm water of a little gulf that ran in to the steps at the bottom of the garden. He porpoised gently and swam out, keeping under as long as he could.

Twenty minutes later he was sitting with Raikes' raincoat about his shoulders in the triangular shadow of the hut.

"Let's sit out here. I'm getting tired of the inside of that place." Raikes put a glass of rum in Hudson's hands and with a shrug of his shoulders added, "Better not smoke."

Hudson drained his glass before he spoke. It was hard to see Raikes in the dim light but he had the impression that the man was nervous.

"I mustn't stay long. They're watching me. They know you're not dead, too."

"They do?" Raikes was still a shadow, merged against the haphazard shadows of the surrounding bushes. "How?"

"I don't know. Your friend Zarko told me."

He heard Raikes breathe gently, and then his voice, free of nervousness, went on—"All right. I'm sorry about it for you, but you can carry it. As long as they don't know where I am it alters nothing and this is the last time you need come. Everything's arranged."

Raikes was making it sound easy, but he felt uncertain with him. He wanted his instructions and to be on his own again.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Take the message to the hotel. I'm going to give you something which will be recognized and prove that you're genuine. All you need do is wait for him to come to you."

"Him?"

"I know that much. When he makes himself known, tell him the plan. Then you can forget the whole thing."

"Tell me what to say and then—"

But Raikes held Hudson's arm. He whispered urgently—"Quiet."

The authority in the tone held Hudson still and silent. They sat frozen into a strained immobility. Hudson heard

his own heart going. There was the sound of the low wind teasing the grass and leaves, and thin, muted, an age away, the faint noise of the orchestra playing at the Gradska Kavana. Then quite plainly Hudson heard the sounds which had first roused Raikes to wariness. The slow creak of a leather strap and the dry crackle of grass as a foot was shifted with heavy caution. For a moment in the shadow of the hut they looked at one another. Hudson turned his head slowly staring across the shadowed bowl of grass before the hut. On the far ridge the blurred bushes and trees stood up vaguely against the dark sky. He kept his eyes on the ridge, forcing them in a hard focus against the shadows until they began to play him tricks. A bush wavered and moved, darkness became animated and full of menace, and with the treachery of his eyes went a falseness of hearing. The wind was full of fancied echoes and sounds, a lazy slither of earth, the quick rattle of a gravel chip, the long whisper of cloth against branches . . . And then, out of the confusion, unmistakably he saw two men. They rose against the night sky and stood, shoulders clear of the bushes, and he heard the clear sound, careless, assured now, of a swivel ring moving as a rifle sling was gathered up. At the same moment Raikes stood up and his hand held Hudson's shoulder for a second. "Run for it." The whisper hung between them, and then the steady pressure of Raikes' hand forced him away, in the opposite direction. Hudson turned and raced through the shadow of the hut and out into the clearing behind it.

"Halt!"

A dozen men rose now about the ridge and Hudson, running instinctively away from Raikes, bent low, his bare feet noiseless on the soft grass, saw the abrupt movement of an upslung rifle barrel drawing light to itself from the pale stars. Then he heard the ragged rattle of shots and saw the stiff tails of muzzle flashes. He ran, careless now of concealment, and behind him he heard the heavy plunge of boots,

the shout of men's voices and another rattle of fire. Rifle bullets whipped through the bushes to his right and he heard their impersonal whine diminish into the darkness. He raced up the slight slope, swinging left and right until he knew he had a lead, and then down the far side. Behind him came the crash of boots, the cries of the men and, distant now, the echo of rifle shots from the opposite direction. He found a path and headed down it, but the shadows deceived him at a turn and he was tripped by a small juniper and sprawled forward, hitting the ground with the side of his body so that the breath went from him in a long hiss. He picked himself up and ran on. In his hand he still held unconsciously the glass from which he had been drinking rum. The sounds behind him were fainter now, but he held on, allowing himself no slackening of pace and in a little while he was through the scrub and racing between tall pines to the sea at a point which was strange to him. He stood for a moment on the small lip of the low cliff and then slid down and worked his way out to the rocks. As he went he slipped off the raincoat and thrust the glass into the pocket. With a glance behind him at the still pines he slid into the sea, swam forward a little way and then let the current take him, treading water and pushing the bundled coat from him. It ballooned for a moment from trapped air, then as he pressed it, it flattened, and began to sink, and moved away from him.

He swam on for a while and then paused, raising his head to take his bearing. Before him was the mainland and away up to his left the town. He had come out on the island shore farther down than the white stone, but by swimming at a slight diagonal he could easily make the villa next to the hotel. He swam on, keeping low in the water and making as little disturbance as possible. So long as it was not known he had been to the island, he was safe. He had to get his clothes and move back into the hotel without raising any suspicion. The noise of the firing must have been heard on

the mainland and he knew he had to move cautiously. That he had been lost sight of for an hour from the hotel meant nothing. Nothing could be proved against him. The soldiers on the island had seen two men, but apart from Raikes, the other might have been any of his accomplices. He had no fears of being positively identified. He knew now, too, why he had kept the glass. Found on the grass it would have been fingerprinted and matched with his own. Behind the illogical grasp of panic there had been sense. Now it would be slowly settling to the sea bottom with the heavy coat. And Raikes? Raikes must look after himself. There was nothing he could do. If he had escaped the bullets he could make his way to his friends.

It was at this moment that from either end of the channel between the island and the mainland two broad searchlight beams broke through the night. As he dropped his head, he heard the steady beat of motorboat engines. The two boats approached each other now along the channel and the lights swung methodically across the water. Hudson dived smoothly and swam under water. When he came to the surface the lights were behind him. He breathed deeply and went down again and as he swam the water above him was turned to a milky effulgence as the light swept over the surface. When he came up he was in darkness, but behind him the two boats had almost met and were turning, moving slowly now from the direction of the island, and their searchlight beams were in a wide V which slowly narrowed, sweeping over the water and touching the fringe of the mainland. Momentarily from the hotel palm walk away to his left Hudson caught the white stippling of faces where a tiny knot of people was collected, watching. Then as the light neared him he ducked and swam forward, groping for the rocks and the gully entrance to the bathing stage of the silent villa. He found it and felt the rocks against his hands as he swept forward. Then he was clinging to the edge of the stage, his feet just

touching the loose gravel bottom, his head and shoulders safe in the shadowed angle of the gully, but over the top of the rocks the light played against the low wall of the garden and as he clung there he could see the great bells of the fuchsia turned to a vivid silver and grey by the hard glare.

He watched the movement of the lights as they met over his head and then slowly parted, sweeping wide again. Taking advantage of the wedge of blackness, he hoisted himself out of the water and raced over the rocks to the fuchsia bush. He picked up his bundle of clothing and dropped over the low wall, into the villa garden. As he did so the lights flicked back as though out on the water someone suspected his presence, sought to give him grace and then catch him as he moved.

In darkness he raised his head and saw that another boat had joined the other two, and now the three were drawing slowly into the shore. The beams played over the hotel garden, over the grounds of the villa before him and probed into the thick cliff scrub beyond the villa. Each boat seemed to have taken a sector, moving in relentlessly. The center light swung across the garden before him and in its radiance he saw a little way up the grass slope the white portico of a summerhouse. When darkness came he bent low and ran up the slope. He was in the summerhouse drawn back from the door and safe from the lights. Hurriedly he drew off his swimming trunks and flung them up on to a ledge of the roof rafters. He pulled on his clothes over his wet body, the buttons and cloth stiff and unwilling beneath his fingers, and then ran his pocket comb through his hair. He had to dress before he returned to the hotel, but he could not return the way he had come and the wall dividing the hotel grounds from the villa garden was too high to climb. He must go up through the grounds of this villa and out on to the road.

As he drew on his sandals, he heard the note of a marine-engine die away and the scrape of a boat's boards against the

rocks below. Men's voices called, subdued and urgent, and then he heard the sound of heavy boots strike against stones. The light lay still across the garden outside. Its hard radiance seeped into the shadowed summerhouse and he saw that the tiled floor was wet where he was standing. He looked round for something to hide the wet stain. In the corner of the house were two deck chairs. He pulled one forward and placed it over the wet patch. He slipped outside and began working his way in the shadows towards the villa.

A beam suddenly slashed violently across the garden, breaking the darkness into a mass of silvery fragments, drawing wheeling lines of shadows from stubby date palms and bushes as it moved. Hudson dropped to his knees behind an ornamental vase from whose rough lip spilled a long trailer of creeper starred with little white flowers whose petals were veined and transparent with the passage of light. He heard men call on the shore below him and voices answer from the garden of the hotel. The beam swung back, leaving him a lane of darkness. He ran forward, up a flight of stone steps and found himself at the hotel end of the villa terrace. Extending on either side of the villa was a high wall which cut off the garden from the road beyond. The only way through was by a small door. He tried it, but it was locked.

Men were coming up through the garden now, beating slowly through the bushes. He stepped back and dropped into the shelter of the terrace balustrade as the beam from the boat below slanted up the villa slope, fanning across the face of the terrace. Momentarily in the cold radiance the marble face of a woman looked sadly down at him, one arm outflung, white and bare, fingers outspread as though to ward off the fierce light. Then the statue on the balustrade was lost and he saw the villa front. Across the checkered tiles was an open pair of French windows flanked by lemon shrubs in terra-cotta pots. Heavy curtains were drawn across them. The light swung slowly across the face of the house and the

two other beams began to play with it, weaving and erratic. The woman's face above him flickered and died, bone-white, brilliant one moment, gone the next. Nearer now sounded the voices coming through the garden and Hudson felt the first rise of panic mounting in him, and he fought down the wild impulse to jump to his feet, heedless of the light, and to run, just run and trust to his speed for safety. Over the beat of his own heart and the tumult of his heavy breathing, he heard suddenly the remote sound of a radio playing a dance tune.

A man shouted closely below. Then voices answered from either end of the terrace, and Hudson realized he was trapped. The lights separated and the terrace was in darkness. Hudson knew there was only one way open to him. He slipped aside the heavy curtains of the French window and entered the villa.

Slowly the room came out of the darkness. He was in a wide, circular hall, roofed with a great dome of blue glass under which a few pale bulbs glimmered in a low chandelier, giving a thin watery light that merged shadows and furniture into amorphous, inimical shapes which seemed to crouch, watching him, waiting for him to move. Then detail came reluctantly to the eye . . . fur rugs on the floor, a stretch of tiles with a blue and white Greek key pattern, the slender bow legs of a walnut escritoire, the warm sheen of lacquer from a Japanese cabinet and the soft moonshine of a great vase with twisting handles, posed like a sentinel at the foot of a wide, curving stairway to his right. Beyond the great vase were a small table, a sofa and chairs and a little table lamp that threw a clear pool of hard light. The radio on the table played a lilting tune full of sweet mockery and then abruptly it stopped.

He moved down the hall, feeling himself adrift on the wanton stream of circumstance. A woman stepped from the

shadows beyond the edge of the bright pool of light and came slowly towards him. He stopped, waiting for her.

She came towards him across the long stretch of tiles and as she neared him she raised her right hand, heavy with rings, touching a brooch which sat high on the swollen bosom of her black evening dress. A faint aura of perfume wreathed itself about him, and his eyes were held by the barbaric cluster of rings and the glitter of gold from the bracelet that spiralled tightly against the plump flesh of one arm. A face looked into his, a comfortable mask which the years had worn bare of original color, a face that was now recolored, ochered and rouged out of some loyalty to a faded glory.

"Listen—just let me—"

A hand made an impatient gesture, and his words died. Outside the window men's feet clattered on the terrace and their voices came sharp and clear. She went past him, her stiff dress a protesting sibilance in the still room. He moved then, drawing towards the little table which held the radio, a bottle of wine and a half-empty glass. He turned and saw her draw the heavy curtains. Zarko and two militia guards stepped into the room.

He stood there waiting, knowing that he had reached the limit where men can protect themselves no longer, and he wondered at the even quality of despair and the power it had of turning reality to fantasy. He stood there under the pale blue dome and nothing was real. He put up a hand and smoothed his dark hair and touched the lapels of his jacket.

Zarko's voice dispelled all fantasy.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Madame Androsh—but we are looking for a man who's just escaped from Lokrum." The two Militia guards, their rifles cradled across their forearms, moved up on either side of him, forming a stiff, threatening trinity.

In the silence that followed the words Hudson saw the woman half-turn towards him, and he waited, his own anxiety

seeming to arrest time, anticipating the eager movement of her hand directed at him and the sound of her voice denouncing him to Zarko. There was nothing he could do. He stood there, powerless, knowing that he had no escape and must submit without struggle. Then her voice came to him, an assured, harsh quality in it, breaking the agony of his wait.

"We haven't seen anyone, have we?" She turned, the last phrase thrown towards him, louder, drawing him into the company, and he saw Zarko raise his large head and stare across the shadowed length of the hall. The two men watched one another. Zarko showed no surprise. His head nodded gently in recognition of Hudson and then a slow smile touched his lips.

"I see. Do you mind if my men go through the house? He could have slipped in." His manner was quiet and respectful, and Hudson realized that Zarko and Madame Androsh were acquainted.

"Please do, Comrade Zarko."

"Thank you." Zarko nodded to his men, who came woodenly to life and moved away to start their search. Zarko came forward to the lighted table. Hudson faced him from the far side. Madame Androsh was watching them, her dark eyes drawn back under the thin painted brows.

Zarko said softly, "I didn't know that Mr. Hudson was a friend of yours."

"We can hardly claim friendship on an hour's acquaintance." She sat down on the settee and one hand came up to play with the cornelian brooch at her throat. Hudson, knowing that she was with him, found his relief restoring his caution, driving his mind now to a watchfulness which must miss nothing. For some reason she was helping him and anxiety for his own safety was charged now with the new responsibility to protect her. She was smiling at him, and he had the impression she was enjoying herself, tasting the mo-

ment of suspense like a connoisseur judging a new wine, unready to speak until the palate was clear again.

"You seem to know Mr. Hudson, too? But then in this town who is there that the Chief of Police doesn't know?"

Hudson knew that was for him. He said, "Comrade Zarko and I are old friends, almost, aren't we?"

"Of course." Zarko turned to Madame Androsh. "Mr. Hudson is a very important man."

"I know. Karl wrote to me from Belgrade about him, that's why I asked him here for a drink this evening."

"I'm glad you did." Zarko's eyes were on the table with its bottle of wine and the single glass. He moved forward curiously. "The authorities in Belgrade insist that we do all we can for him."

Hudson picked up the half-empty glass of wine from the table. "Everyone has been very kind." As he held it he knew that Madame Androsh had seen the gesture. They were allied now and he had no fear that he would find her unready.

"I'm sure they have." Zarko's eyes were held by the glass. Hudson guessed what he was thinking. He kept his fingers cupped round it, hiding the smear of lipstick on its rim.

Madame Androsh turned and smiled at Zarko. "A glass of wine while you wait for your men, Comrade Zarko?"

Zarko shook his head. "No thank you, madame. Though—" His eyes were on Hudson's hand. "—I see Mr. Hudson has had to drink alone."

"I've tried to persuade Madame Androsh to join me, but she refuses."

She stood up as the guards came clattering down the stairway. "When you get to my age the choice between a good wine and indigestion is easy to make. After sixty years of honest service my stomach is beginning to play the traitor."

Zarko chuckled but his words as he spoke seemed to probe still.

"And the only way to deal with a traitor, madame, is to

watch him constantly." He looked towards his two guards and they shook their heads. "We're unlucky it seems."

"He may still be in the garden," suggested Hudson.

Madame Androsh stood up. "You underrate Comrade Zarko. His men will have gone over every inch of it, trampling down my zinnias and azalea bushes."

"If they have done any damage, dear madame, they shall regret it." Zarko bowed to them and then moved away towards the window and Madame Androsh went with him. She stood at the window for a while, watching him go. Then she drew the curtains with a quick, imperious gesture and came back.

"So—you're a very important man?"

As she spoke she came close to him, and he saw the white powdering in the worn folds of skin around her eyes.

"Comrade Zarko thinks so."

She went to a cabinet by the stairs and brought out fresh glasses. She came back and there was a silence between them as she filled the two glasses. Her hand was steady as she held his drink out to him. "How many men, I wonder, have been betrayed by a woman's lipstick?" She laughed, raising her glass to catch an amber glow from the light. "You're a very quick-witted young man."

"I'm a very grateful one at this moment."

He watched her, curious, knowing that if she demanded the truth from him he would have to give it.

"Never believe anyone who tells you that age brings wisdom. My digestion, you will be glad to know, is perfectly sound." She drained the glass.

"Why did you help me?"

She sat down, not answering for the moment, and he felt that she was not considering her answer, but studying him still as though his first movement into favor had still to be confirmed.

"Because I liked the look of you. Because I'm the kind of

woman who never asks herself whether she can afford things, and because I don't like the arrogant way circumstances take themselves for granted."

"Most women would have called at once for help."

"At my age it takes more than a strange man to frighten me. You must see to it that Zarko never knows how quixotic I've been."

"I shall be careful. Who is Karl?"

"My son. He's secretary to the Ministry of Justice in Belgrade."

"You know that Zarko will check with him about my introduction to you?"

"Of course. Karl talks to me on the telephone every night. I'll see that everything is put right." She paused for a moment, leaning forward and tilting her glass. Then she went on. "The trouble with a good lie is that once you've planted it, it goes on needing attention. I ask no questions of you. The less I know the fewer lies I have to tell. But, remember, Zarko is no ordinary policeman. In Belgrade he has quite a reputation for efficiency."

"I've double cause now to be careful."

He came round and sat by her, holding his glass in his hands. She was old, but there was a freshness of spirit in her which made him forget the painted face. Looking at her he was aware of her unfading intelligence and the generous courage which she had used on his behalf. He raised his glass and drank, his eyes acknowledging his gratitude, and then beyond her, in the long reaches of velvet shadow at the far end of the hall he saw Franja. She came forward, a short evening jacket swinging open over the white dress, and her eyes were on him full of curiosity and surprise. He stood up and he heard the stiff rustle of Madame Androsh's gown as she rose. Her voice came quietly to him as he watched Franja's tall figure slide into the great pool of yellow light. "My granddaughter, Mr. Hudson. I think you two have al-

ready met." The words finished in a delighted stir of sound, a laugh that echoed caressingly in the blue recesses of the great dome. He swung round and saw the old face, cracked with a smile, the dark eyes alive and mischievous, the young spirit dancing in them, and the harsh, almost masculine voice carried on, "You see, you weren't quite a stranger to me when you burst in just now."

Lepovitch was in a jubilant mood, and something of his feelings had worked into his report, making the writing of it difficult. He found himself stopping at times even when he knew exactly what he wanted to say, and staring out of the window. In the tall poplars at the road edge a nightingale was singing. A late tram went by on its way to Gruz and little white-shirted knots of strollers passed slowly up the hill, reluctant to leave the balm of the evening for the stuffiness of their waiting homes. The bird sang on with a rich indifference to the noises of the town, and for a moment Lepovitch remembered the nightingales that used to sing in the white-blossom groves of acacia on the hills around San Pietro where he had been born. Maybe still did . . . he saw the white walls of the level-crossing guard house which had been his home, his mother, who had wanted him to be a priest, maneuvering the counterweighted red and white bar, and his father, slacked into a shapeless huddle against the house steps, smoking, fuddled, flipping maize grain to the ruffle-legged bantam cocks . . . his father who had never wanted anything for him. He thrust the memory from him and wrote . . .

. . . The operation worked perfectly and our task here has been considerably simplified. Raikes was killed in attempting to avoid capture. There should be no complications about this since he already is officially dead. It would have been better if we could have had a word with him before he died but our hands were forced by circumstances out of our control. When he was surprised there was another man with him. He has escaped and his

identity is unknown, though we suspect it was the other Englishman, Hudson. At the moment Hudson seems to have an alibi for the relevant period of time, but this is being closely investigated . . .

. . . If Hudson is what we think he is, then he is now working on his own and his chances of success are considerably diminished. No matter what co-operation he expects from traitors in the town, and their presence is obvious, he is now under such a handicap that it would not surprise me if he receives orders to abandon the whole project . . . If we only had more information about the man he is here to aid I should be entirely confident of success. As you say, the dossiers you have forwarded give very little help. I hope that the information you get about Hudson will be of more assistance. Zarko's full report will follow tomorrow when I write. I am no expert in calligraphy, but when you see the photostat copy of the letter which led to Raikes' discovery, I think you will agree with me that it was probably written by a woman and not a very educated one and that she has attempted to disguise her writing. We shall find her in time . . .

He paused. The nightingale was still singing but with it now came the raucous voices of a band of youths moving up the hill singing their Pioneer song—

> One, two; one, two. We are the young Army of Tito!
> One, two; one, two. We are Tito's youth!

DAY SIX

All the way up the stairs from the mortuary to Zarko's room not a word had been spoken between them. They had come up, under the libidinous eyes of Bacchus, watched by the algae-draped tritons and the bright, precocious stares of the cupids and cherubs. The sentry at the top of the stairs had stiffened, saluted, and followed them with his eyes, half his curiosity in Hudson lost in an envious contemplation of his well-made shoes and his light grey suit. Propaganda, he thought. When they came abroad the crypto-fascist countries saw that their representatives made a good showing, but everyone knew—didn't *Borba* and *The Thirty Days* say so?—that in the capitalist West food and clothing were scarce and obtainable only by the rich. Whereas, he was well fed and clothed. He shrugged his thick shoulders more comfortably into the blue-dyed battledress which had been made in Bradford, settled the old American army carbine affectionately against his side and held down a rich belch that rose from the fried sausages which his wife had opened from a long-hoarded UNRRA tin that morning for his breakfast.

Zarko shut the door behind Hudson and waited. Hudson said nothing. He went to the window and as he stared out he lit himself a cigarette. Ruthlessly Zarko had shown him Raikes' body, hoping to shock him and waiting for some slip. He still waited.

"You see, Mr. Hudson. We were right—about Raikes at

least." Zarko could wait no longer, silence was an embarrassment to him.

Hudson turned from the window. The real death of Raikes had not shocked him. At this moment he knew that he had half-expected it ever since he had left the island. But he was conscious of a real loss.

He stood looking up at the photograph of Tito on the far wall. Underlying all the other thoughts in his mind, he found himself wondering whether these photographs were supplied free to all public offices or whether they had to be bought. Then he asked sharply—

"How was he killed?" A picture of Raikes' naked body on the cold slab burned into his mind.

"Escaping. We had to shoot. He was making for the water, hoping to swim to the mainland from the island." Zarko watched him closely and the burden of the enigma which this man presented pressed heavily on him.

"The island?" The tone was flat, revealing nothing.

"Didn't you know he was on Lokrum?"

"No, I did not." It was hard to say it—for between the spoken lie, and the lie he acted every day there was a curious difference. Zarko said nothing, and the silence between them suddenly became unbearable to Hudson. He went on, "How did you discover he was there?"

Zarko shrugged his shoulders, ignoring the question. Then he said, "I think it would be better if we assumed that Raikes' death took place six days ago. I will see that this second burial takes place discreetly. You would like to be present?"

Hudson nodded. "I would." He moved towards the door and Zarko came with him.

"I'm sorry about all this, Mr. Hudson. Let's hope that this is the end—for both of us—of a very unpleasant affair."

They shook hands and Hudson went out.

Zarko closed the door on him. He stood scratching the back of his head reflectively. Then he shrugged his shoulders

and went back to his desk. He reached underneath it and switched off the microphone extension. A few moments later Lepovitch came in. He dropped stiffly into one of the leather chairs and waited for Zarko to speak. Zarko reached for the *rakia* bottle and poured two glasses. They both drank. After a moment Zarko dropped his elbows to the desk and rubbed his chin.

"You heard him?"

"Yes. Whatever he is or isn't—he's a clever man."

"One thing is very clear. We've reached a point now when we must assume that he is guilty."

"I never assumed anything else."

"At the beginning of an affair it's wise to keep an open mind. The moment we get one fact which proves that he knows something, he must be taken in. If he knows anything Belgrade will make him talk. But they won't thank us for giving them a man who has nothing to say. One fact, Lepovitch, one absolute fact—and then they can have him." He paused, eyeing the stiff figure, the lean, hard face and the still grey eyes behind the polished spectacles, and as some compensation for the enforced repression of his own good nature, he went on, "Of course, if you'd like to recommend to them that they take that risk now I won't stand in your way . . ."

Lepovitch wriggled slightly as though a cold hand had touched the warmth of his neck. The grey eyes avoided Zarko, straying to a picture on the far wall. The man shook his head.

"No. We can't accept that responsibility yet."

The barber's assistant nodded to the empty chair and Hudson came forward and sat down. As he settled himself the man flipped a cover over him.

"Just trim me up around the back of the neck and then a shampoo."

"Very good . . ." The man's hand touched the top of his head, bending him forward and he felt the cold flick of scissors. Above the long mirror over the wall basins he could hear the steady whir of the electric fan and the irregular whicker of the colored streamers that were tied to its grill.

The drone of voices from the waiting cutsomers at the back of the shop, the chatter of the assistants, the sudden snarl of hot water frothing into a basin, made a confused background for the urgency of his thoughts.

The assistant came round the chair side and tipped Hudson's chin up and in the mirror before him he met the eyes of Sandro Venetti who was sitting in the next chair. The two faces were fixed in the glass, no movement touched them, but in that moment they understood one another. Sandro's assistant pushed the great head back and began to trim the bushy beard. In the mirror Hudson saw the reflection of the open doorway and leaning against it, reading a newspaper, the man who had been following him all the morning, his old friend with the patched shoe. He smiled openly and the assistant, mistaking the look, began to talk.

"On holiday?"

"Yes."

"Shall I thin it a bit on top?"

"Don't crop me."

"Swiss?"

"What makes you think so?"

"Your accent. Maybe—" a little quieter now, "your shoes."

Hudson grunted, giving neither yes nor no.

"The Swiss pick up languages easily, but there's always the accent. Good engineers. A lot in this country just now . . ."

The man's chatter was a cover to Hudson's thoughts. That morning when he had left Zarko, he had found his mind made up. Raikes was dead and he acknowledged the obligation to carry on and finish what he had started. There was

someone in the hotel whose escape was of great importance. Sandro who knew how the escape was to be made might also know who the man at the hotel was. One thing had emerged clearly. He had to talk to Sandro.

He had sat on the quay wall and watched the crowd around Sandro's fish stall thin, and when Sandro had packed up and moved into the town he had followed him down the main boulevard. He had seen Sandro go into a barber's shop. For a moment he had loitered at a shop window examining the cheap woodwork decorated with brightly-painted flowers and the rings and bracelets in which there was still some trace of the fine designs of the past which had inspired them. Behind him would be his follower.

Now, he was sitting in the chair next to Sandro and wondering how he could approach him without raising the suspicions of the watcher who lolled in the doorway, reading his paper in the sun.

"Never know what to do with a holiday. Don't you find that?"

Hudson stirred in his chair.

"The whole point of a holiday is to do nothing about it."

The assistant sucked at his cheek. "You sit around at home and you know you're in the way. Your wife finds jobs for you and you end up by working harder than ever."

The assistant who was working on Sandro looked across. "Anyone who finds a holiday difficult ought to have his head examined. Go and work on one of the new railways, or take a cultural trip."

"If you were married—" Hudson's assistant got no further.

"Then my wife would come along, too! Culture, it's a great thing. You've got to travel to get it. Last year I went up to Split. Place is full of culture."

Hudson's assistant groaned humorously. "Stop him someone."

Hudson heard Sandro chuckle deep in his beard and his

voice boomed out, "Culture's a great thing. Jokan here's right. We should all get it. But the best place for culture. . ." Sandro paused—was it a mocking echo intended only for himself, Hudson thought, as though Sandro were saying 'But the best place for rock bass . . .'—and then the deep voice went on, ". . . is a museum."

Jokan broke in. "Oh, the museum at Split now—"

Sandro cocked his head over as Jokan began to trim above his ears and Hudson saw the dark, lively eyes reflected in the mirror. "What's wrong with the museum here? I've spent many an afternoon in it. You can learn a lot there." The eyes held Hudson in the glass and momentarily the tip of a pink tongue edged between the bearded lips as though the man were savoring some faint trace of salt left by the sea winds.

"If I asked my wife to spend an afternoon like that . . ." The assistant breathed heavily, rolled his eyes and when the laughter died, went on solicitously to Hudson, "What shampoo will you have? Pine tar, eau-de-cologne or our own special?"

"Eau-de-cologne." Hudson's head moved. Sandro's face was lost to him now, but the watcher at the door, leaning against the post, came into view, wrapped in a dreamy contemplation of his shoes, his body bathed in the angle of bright sunshine. From where he stood he could have heard each word, but Hudson was sure that there had been nothing to rouse him. Culture, everyone talked about culture these days. It was a safe subject. Sandro had said nothing unusual, but the phrases were clear in Hudson's mind. "The best place . . . is a museum."

The assistant held Hudson's head over the basin and began to run the hot water for the shampoo, his fingers working against Hudson's scalp. Over the sound of the water and the other talk going on Hudson heard Sandro rise and move away from his chair, and then his voice booming and jocular,

"Well, Jokan, if you're free tomorrow afternoon, I'll take you along to the museum and show you that it's better than anything Split can offer."

"I'm a barber, not a fisherman. I work in the afternoons."

"But what do you do at night? Eh, Jokan? What about the nights, when I'm working? Are you out looking for culture then?" Sandro's laugh echoed loudly, a rich rumble of sound which was taken up by others. Then he was gone. Hudson sat, enjoying the friction of fingers against his scalp. Sandro had made himself clear.

When the assistant had finished with him he paid and went to get his hat from a hook on the wall above the chairs where waiting customers sat. As he turned he saw that sitting in one of the chairs was the young honeymoon husband from the hotel. He must have entered while Hudson was being shampooed. He was deep in a book, a loose sheet of paper on the page to take the notes he made from time to time. At his side on an empty chair was a little pile of parcels. As Hudson reached up for his hat, he flexed his knee and gave the chair a jerk. The parcels slid off to the ground. The man looked up hastily, recognizing Hudson, and frowned, but Hudson—aware of the watcher at the door and anxious to give him some occupation—smiled apologetically and bent down to help with the parcels. As he picked them up, crouching on the ground, he murmured rapidly—

"I'm so sorry. Very clumsy of me. Didn't see your parcels there. Hope there's nothing which could have been broken . . ." A low murmur of sound, pitched so that the watcher could not hear, a whispered, confidential sequence of words in which any message might have been implied. He saw a thin flare of anger in the young man's eyes as he protested against the help with the parcels. Then as he stood up and with a last apology made for the door he saw the watcher's face. He was interested, awakened for the first time that morning, looking beyond Hudson at the young man, a small

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frown on his face, his cheeks blown out gently in thought. Before Hudson could reach the door, he had lounged aside, folded his newspaper and was pretending an interest in a dog that leisurely crossed the cobbles. Hudson turned down the road, heading for the hotel, and the watcher began to follow him, rehearsing in his mind the phrases of his report to Comrade Zarko. In that moment while the parcels were picked up anything might have been said, or passed.

When Sandro entered the living room of the apartment in the Ulica Jesac, he found Tulio with his feet up on the kitchen table reflectively oiling and cleaning a revolver, the full magazine lying on the table by a flask of white Dalmatian wine. He was whistling gently to himself. He looked up, smiling at Sandro but said nothing. Sandro stood with his back to the door, watching him. He was very fond of Tulio, fonder than he had ever been of Luca. Luca had been able to look after himself, but Tulio—his glance went to the plush-framed picture on the wall—was more like his dead wife Carlotta. Tulio had to be looked after. Though Sandro suspected that Tulio's apparent stupidity marked a form of mental sleep rather than a lack of capacity. One day something might waken him. Sandro hoped it would not happen today.

"You should lock the door before you bring that out to clean."

Sandro went over to the table and poured himself a glass of wine. He sat down opposite Tulio and began to feel for the words which all morning he had known he would have to use.

Tulio ignored the reprimand. "Someday I hope I get the chance to use it. I clean it and I oil it, but I never use it. That's all wrong."

"You thought you might have had to use it this morning, didn't you?" Sandro could follow Tulio's thoughts.

Tulio kept his eyes on the weapon. "The whole town knows a man was killed on the island last night. We know it was Raikes. If they've taken him, why shouldn't they be coming for us?"

Sandro drank a little of his wine. "If they'd known about us, they would have come for us at the same time." Sandro paused, then went on. "Listen, Tulio—I want to talk to you. It isn't going to be easy for either of us, not easy for me to say it and not easy for you to hear . . ."

Tulio dropped his feet from the table and reached for the magazine. He slipped it back, his eyes now on his father, then pushed the revolver to one side as he poured himself a glass of wine.

"I'm listening."

"The Englishman Raikes was betrayed to the police. There are four people in Dubrovnik who could have done it. Me, you, the other Englishman, or Yelitsa. Was it you?"

Tulio laughed at that, but the laugh died as Sandro dropped his hand on the revolver and drew it towards him. Tulio looked quickly at his father's face. Then his fear was gone. His father was smiling as he answered for Tulio—

"No, it wasn't you, Tulio, and it wasn't me. That leaves Yelitsa and the Englishman."

"We know nothing about him."

"But if he were working for the police and betrayed Raikes, he would have betrayed us as well. We'd have been taken by now. He's known about us for some days. There'd be no point in leaving us free. No, he didn't do it, Tulio."

"But that only leaves Yelitsa?" A frown creased Tulio's forehead, and Sandro realized he would have to lead him gently.

"I know."

"I don't believe it!"

"Don't you?"

"No." There was a stubborn note in Tulio's voice now.

"I do." Sandro leaned forward across the table, his face stern, holding Tulio's look steadily. "She could have done it, Tulio. An anonymous telephone call to the police, or a note slipped into the post box . . . Nothing to give her away, or to give us away, but enough to finish Raikes. She did do it, Tulio. Four people, and three of them ruled out, leaves one, one for certain and that one Yelitsa." He was speaking harshly now, driving his words home and keeping his eyes on Tulio, forcing a lesson on a dull child.

"But why? Why should she do it?" Anger at being trapped into accepting knowledge which hurt and confused him, made Tulio bang the table as he spoke.

"I think I know why, Tulio." Within himself, adding now to the sense of weariness and strain which had been his life for so long, he felt the burden of a new pain. While Luca had lived, a loyalty to both his sons, an acknowledgment that they must shape their own lives for themselves, had kept him silent. It was a loyalty which had strained him for he had known that he would have forfeited the affection of both of them if he had told the one what he should have discovered for himself and played the informer on the other. He had seen his duty as a father to be an obligation to keep his family together. Time, he had hoped, would solve the problem. But Time had been of no help to him, and now a loyalty to something greater than his family was forcing his hand. At this moment, he was trying not to let his personal feelings towards Yelitsa, whom he blamed as the cause of all the trouble, influence his decision. If he had liked her he would have taken the same course.

"What do you know about Yelitsa that I don't know?" There was suspicion in Tulio's voice.

"I know she never wanted to go to Italy. I know she likes the regime here—but she allowed herself to be persuaded."

"By me. I'm her husband. Where I go, she goes."

"No, Tulio. Not by you. She was going because Luca was

going. She and Luca were lovers before she married you and they were lovers after she married you."

"It's a lie!" Tulio spoke violently, his giant hands spread wide on the table top.

"Have I ever lied to you?"

There was a pause, then the answer came, grudgingly.

"No."

"And I'm not lying now. If Luca went Yelitsa was prepared to go, but when Luca was killed she had no reason to go. And in her stupid way she probably thought that if Raikes was killed we would give up the whole idea. She thought Raikes was the reason for the escape. She knows nothing about the other man in the hotel. Raikes dead meant no escape . . . I can hear her saying it all to herself. And because she loved Luca she was glad to betray Raikes."

Sandro stood up, talking rapidly, giving Tulio no chance to speak, anxious to force on him the truth before his passion stirred to life.

"What I'm saying is true, Tulio. I hoped never to have to say it. I hoped the whole thing would die away and Luca would come to his senses. But now it's different. She's betrayed us. She's sure we won't go. That's what she wants. And that's what she must think. We're going Tulio, and we're leaving her behind. But she must never know we're going . . ." He broke off as Tulio stood up suddenly.

"Luca . . ." Tulio whispered the word incredulously. He walked slowly towards the window, Sandro watching him anxiously. "She and Luca . . ." He was talking to himself. "She and Luca . . ."

Tulio stared out of the window. From the alleyway below came the shouts of playing children. His eyes followed the whorled markings on a geranium leaf where a leggy plant reached up from a tin on the balcony, its pink flowers browning at the edges from lack of water. Later in the day he would water them. Sandro never lied. Everything he had said was

true, and slowly he began to accept the truth. There had ever been only two things in his life: Sandro, and the security which rested in him, and Yelitsa who had given him everything else, comfort and attention and the pleasures of her firm, naked body . . . Luca had taken that. He turned angrily away from the window.

"When she comes I'll kill her!" His face was ugly with rage as his imagination played with the idea of Luca and Yelitsa together.

"Tulio!" His father went to him and gripped his arm.

"I'll kill her!" Tulio shook himself free. "I'll kill her!"

His great hand swept forward, knocking the bottle of wine from the table. It splintered against the front of the iron stove, the steelwork glistening under the spilled wine. He stared at the pool that formed on the floor. Sandro heard his harsh, labored breathing in the silence of the room.

"She isn't worth the wine you've wasted," he said calmly as he moved to clear up the mess of broken glass.

Tulio swung back to the window. He stood there, biting at his lower lip, feeling some of the violence gone from him in his wild action. Sandro's voice went on calmly, driving at him with the authority he had always respected.

"You won't kill her, Tulio. You're going to do what I say. If you kill her, if you let her know anything—we'll never get away. Are you listening, Tulio?"

Tulio turned, and Sandro saw that he was holding him. Tulio's face was dull, relaxed with his confusion and the strain of his anger.

"What can I do?"

Sandro came over to him. "You're going to be clever, Tulio. You're going to lie to her as she lied to you. We're going to Italy and she must never know."

"Never know?"

"You can do it, Tulio. You can hide everything you know."

Tulio looked at him.

"Yes. You're right. I can do it."

"She may be over today. She'll come if she can."

"She'll never know anything from me."

"Can you leave her behind?" Sandro was probing, testing Tulio. He had to be certain.

Tulio shook his head impatiently. "I don't care what happens to her. If she's in trouble with the police when we've gone—so much the better!" He laughed contemptuously. "She'll probably lie her way out of it."

Sandro was far from sure that she would be able to lie her way out of the trouble that would start when they had gone, but he had other people to think about. She might get off easily, she might be treated severely, but if he didn't carry on with what had been arranged then other people would suffer. It was the old problem, so often faced in the life he had known. The choice was between two evils, whatever one did brought suffering, and the necessity for making the choice was a torture which had to be borne.

"I'm sure she'll expect now that we won't go. She must go on thinking that."

Sandro went back and finished cleaning up the mess by the stove. He got another bottle of wine and poured a glass for Tulio, but his son would not drink. Sandro left him alone.

An hour later, Tulio standing by the window saw Yelitsa come down the ulica. "Here she is." His voice was quite calm.

Sandro watched him as Yelitsa came into the room. Tulio moved across to her and he said quietly, "What are you doing here today?"

Yelitsa came forward into the room. "I managed to change places with another girl who wanted her day off later in the week." She looked at the two, searching for some confirmation of the thing she expected. "You've heard? I had to come."

Tulio watched her. Any other time he would have gone to her, impatient to have his hands on her body. Now, he faced her calmly.

"Yes, we've heard. It's finished everything."

"What do you mean?"

Sandro slumped dejectedly into a chair and ran one hand through his thick beard. He spoke quietly, his voice slow with apathy.

"Ever since we decided to go things have been against us. Luca was killed. Now the Englishman . . . What can we do? Go on with it still? Have another of us killed before it's all over? No, it's better to be sensible and stay here."

Yelitsa held down the satisfaction the words brought to her. This was what she had wanted. She said evenly—"You've been thirty years away from Italy. This is your country now, and mine, and Tulio's . . ." Her voice grew in confidence, hope and satisfaction raising it gently to a tone of authority. "I never did like the idea. I only wish I'd never agreed to it . . . then Luca would still be alive . . ." She half-turned from them to hide the tightening of her face as she thought of Luca.

Tulio swung round and went to the window. He jerked the window open, his hands gripping the frames fiercely, but when he spoke his voice was calm.

"There it is. What's the use of arguing about it?" He bent forward and picked up one of the tins of geraniums. "It's time these were watered."

Hudson flicked a gravel chip at the ornamental vase. It struck an inch below the voluted edge on which the lizard lay flattened, the archaic head slightly raised. His hand reached out, groping towards the path for another chip.

"He reminds me of a mouse we had when I was a prisoner of war. It used to come out and crouch on top of a biscuit tin and watch us at night. We never tamed it. I don't think

it wanted to be tamed. It just used to sit there and watch us and think its own thoughts and when it got tired of thinking it went away. In the end someone got angry and threw a boot at it and it was killed. We were quite glad. When you're a prisoner you don't like to be watched and not know what the watcher is thinking, even if it is only a mouse . . ."

He abandoned the search for another chip and rolled over on the grass. Franja was sitting with her knees drawn up, her hands clasped around them, staring through the thin tamarisk screen at the sea. She was smiling to herself, but he knew that though she heard him when he spoke, she was not with him.

"Cigarette?"

After a moment she shook her head gently. He lit his own cigarette and flicked the match at the lizard, but it remained unmoved. Madame Androsh and Franja had invited him to tea that afternoon. Although nothing in Madame Androsh's manner had changed, now, alone in the garden with Franja, he was puzzled by the change of mood in the girl. That she should fall into a reverie as they sat enjoying the sun and the view was natural, but behind it he had begun to sense something else.

He put out a hand and touched her arm.

"What's the matter? Don't you like animal stories?"

She came back to him then, turning and giving a quick little laugh.

"I was just dreaming. I think I would like a cigarette."

He lit one for her. She drew at it, meeting his eyes frankly. When he had come on to the terrace with her grandmother she had been afraid of herself and her attitude to him now that Zarko had spoken to her. At first it had not been too difficult. He was smiling, gentle, now and again echoing in words the silent movement of her own thoughts, and slipping easily into just the right relationship with her grandmother and herself which the occasion demanded. Left alone with

him she found herself drawing away from him in order to obscure an insincerity in herself which she felt must be obvious. The touch of his hand on her arm had startled her into an awareness of the danger which such a mood represented. If Zarko had spoiled the promise of their relationship, then at least this man must not know it.

"How long were you a prisoner?"

"Four years."

"Were you in the Army?"

"No. A pilot. What were you doing all that time?"

"I wasn't long back from school when it began. Then I was a nurse in Belgrade, not a very good one."

"Soldiers judge nurses on their appearance, not their ability."

Franja laughed and began to rise. "I've an early concert this evening. I must get back." Hudson took her arm and helped her up, and the pressure of his hand on her bare skin was a comfort that suddenly dispersed all her fears. She stood by him, unwilling to break the touch. "How did you come to be a prisoner?" She knew the words were no more than a means to prolong the moment.

"I fell into the sea and began to swim the wrong way." He slipped his hand up her arm, waiting for her to turn and move away with him, but she stood, watching him, her face raised to him, young and pretty, and he was suddenly bitterly aware of the gulf which separates one personality from another. He was curious about those years in Belgrade. Whom had she nursed—Germans, Italians, Chetniks, partisans? But whatever name you gave them they were all men, and she had been a girl not long from school. And now here she was in Dubrovnik, singing for a living, being friendly towards him out of what reason? Because for a moment he could laugh and swim with her, give her an interval to forget so many other things? Or were there beneath that attractive innocence other thoughts? He turned her gently, taking both

her elbows in his hands so that she faced him, her body drawn closer to him, the swing of her skirt touching his legs, the slow respiration marked in the gentle rise and fall of her brown throat.

"Tell me, has Zarko told you it's unwise to be so friendly with me yet?"

"No."

Still holding her elbows he bent forward and kissed her gently on the lips. The touch awakened in her a desire to move closer to him, to put her arms around him and hold him to her, to meet his affection with a wildness which seemed to offer a security which could endure beyond the moment, but she held herself back, allowing him and herself only the briefness of a passing gesture of friendliness.

"If anyone reports that to Zarko, you can blame it on me. Say I lost my head."

They turned together towards the villa. Franja said nothing but until they were in sight of the terrace she was glad that he kept her arm in his.

When she had gone Hudson was left alone on the terrace with Madame Androsh. Franja had insisted on going back to the town by herself. For a while they sat in silence.

Madame Androsh got up slowly and moved to the balustrade. She bent over a pot of flowers and began to pick off dead blossoms with a quick snapping movement of her fingers. Hudson watched her. When she moved it was like some tradition-proud merchant ship advancing under a spread of whispering canvas with her own painted face for figurehead. She nipped off the last dead blossoms and turned to him.

"How long ago was it that you read a fairy story, young man?"

"A long time. Why?"

"Because I think you must have forgotten what happens

to a princess when she gets kissed in a beautiful garden by a handsome young stranger."

Hudson laughed. "I should have thought the tamarisk bushes would have prevented you from seeing that."

"Not from the window of my bedroom. For a princess a kiss means only one thing. She promptly falls in love."

"But only in fairy stories."

"You're a fool. Any woman alone in a garden with a man she likes sees herself as a princess in a fairy story." She paused for a moment, smiling at him. Then she went on seriously: "I'm very fond of Franja. Just being in Yugoslavia is hard enough for her. Her father was General Dmitar Pazan. He and her mother—my daughter—were killed in a Belgrade air raid. Her father was a liberal and a poet. Franja gets her romanticism from him. She's apt to take a kiss seriously."

"But I was only being polite," he protested, smiling.

"Exactly. If you were being sincere I would never have spoken. It's the polite men who do all the damage."

"The last thing I want to do is to hurt her."

"Then don't raise hopes which you can't fulfill. Franja's lived through a war and a revolution. But she's an inexperienced girl. If you ever want to kiss her again, don't do it unless it has nothing to do with politeness."

"I promise."

She came up to him, her eyes shrewd and smiling. "Maybe I was wrong to have helped you yesterday. Some day I'll regret it. No, don't tell me I shan't. The time always comes when we regret our good actions." She took his arm and began to lead him towards the French windows. "Now come and mix me a drink, and tell me all about England. It's twenty years since I was there."

A few rooms away a party was going on. For an hour Lepovitch had tried to work and ignore the sounds of laugh-

ter and voices. He got up at last and rang for the floor waiter. When the man came he said curtly—

"My compliments to the party along the corridor, and would they please make less noise." A sharp light glinted on his glasses as he jerked his head towards the noise. He went back to his table when the waiter had gone and began to read what he had written.

. . . The dossiers and history of all the staff at the hotel have now been checked and they seem in order. Most of them are local people who are seasonally employed, and the others are professional waiters whose records show that they have been in this service for some time, working in the winter at Zagreb or Belgrade hotels and coming here for the summer. Two of them are very reliable men who have worked for Zarko for a long time . . .

. . . The dossier on Hudson which came this morning proves, to my mind, that he is no newcomer to the kind of work which we believe he is doing here. The only conceivable reason why he remained in prison so long, when he found it easy to arrange the escapes of others, must have been because he had orders to. Many P.O.W. camps in Germany were centers of British Military espionage . . .

Down the hall, the waiter knocked on the door of the room from which the noise was coming. There was a cheerful shout for him to enter. He stood in the open doorway, hesitating apologetically. In the room were two Army officers, their tunics undone, their faces flushed with *pivo* and brandy, and two women. One pair sat on the bed balancing a plate of shrimps between them. The other pair stood by a small table which was covered with bottles and a paper parcel from which part of a cold chicken protruded.

"Well?" The officer on the bed loosened his arm from the woman's waist.

"The comrade in room fifty-four would be obliged if you could make a little less noise."

"Tell the comrade down the hall . . ." said the other officer

happily, "to jump out of the window." He rewarded himself with a fat kiss on the back of the neck of the woman at his side.

"Certainly, comrade captain, if you insist. But I think I ought to point out that the comrade down the hall is a man who is used to other people jumping out of the window when he comes into a room." For the fraction of a second, the lid of his left eye flickered. The officer on the bed understood at once. He jumped up spilling the plate of shrimps and assumed a military dignity.

"We understand. Tell the comrade that we regret we have disturbed him. And when you've done that—" he followed the line of the waiter's look— "come back and have a glass of brandy."

In his room, Lepovitch made no effort to turn as the waiter brought his apology. Alone, in the silence, he turned the page of his report and read on—

. . . his alibi for the evening in question still seems genuine. Secretary Androsh has confirmed that he requested his mother to extend any courtesy she could to Hudson. He was invited to her villa again today and for the moment we see no reason why this contact should be broken. Her granddaughter, Franja Pazan, is already working under our instructions. Apart from this he has no other close contacts. So far the only outside movement he has made which might arouse suspicion is a brief passage which occurred between him and the journalist Sumitch in a barber's shop today. This line is being followed . . .

. . . From the other end, i.e. the note which betrayed Raikes, we are so far without any lead. Every effort is being made to establish the writer's identity and a sample of the handwriting has been given to municipal and public offices here with instructions to search their records for a similiar hand.

. . . As for Comrade Zarko, I shall not overlook your request for the fullest possible report. At the moment I can only say that while he sometimes takes an unorthodox line, there is nothing to

suggest that he is not devoting himself whole-heartedly to this affair. His greatest fault seems to be a bourgeois sympathy which might at a crucial moment interfere with the complete ruthlessness which we are called upon to exercise if the People's Republics are to be purged of all subversive neo-fascist elements . . .

He sat back and lit himself a cigarette, staring out at the night. At this moment possibly Zarko was writing about him, making up his own report, and somewhere in Belgrade the two would be compared. He dismissed Zarko from his mind and began to write to his wife.

DAY SEVEN

Hudson sat on the low wall outside the museum, finishing his cigarette before he entered. On a seat about a hundred yards from him was his old friend with the patched shoe.

These days the man, and his fellows who shared the duty, made no attempt to disguise their presence. In a perverse way, he was almost uncomfortable when he lost them for a while—as he had done this morning when he was at the cemetery.

Leaving Raikes' second grave, he and Zarko had stopped for a moment before the first burial place. The vault in the wall was now covered with a stone which bore a bald inscription: *John Raikes. Died May 7th 1948. Aged 40 years.* Zarko had gone up to the stone.

"I'll have this removed." His plump, brown-mottled hand had rested on the ledge before the stone where the wreaths were now turning brown. Then he had picked up from among the wreaths a withered bunch of roses with a slip of blue paper attached to them. He had held the bunch, looking at it, and then his eyes had gone to Hudson. They understood one another, knew that each remembered exactly how many wreaths had been put on the ledge, knew that a love of detail for the richness it gave to life, belonged to them both. Then Hudson had spoken.

"Who put that there?"

Zarko shrugged his shoulders. "The card isn't signed. Peo-

ple do the oddest things." He jerked the paper away from the bouquet openly and put it in his pocket.

"It interests you?"

"Why not? When a reason for a thing isn't apparent, one's interest grows." He fanned his face gently with his panama as they turned away towards the main gates.

Zarko's car was waiting. Hudson had accepted his offer of a lift and when he was dropped in the town, he had also arranged to dine at Zarko's house the following night.

Yes, Zarko was an odd man, generous and human one minute, and the next ruthless and efficient. Never at any time shaken in the principle which he held.

Hudson rose, throwing the stub of his cigarette away. Inside the museum he went up to the attendant in his little alcove to pay his five-dinar entrance fee. The attendant was an elderly man in a faded blue uniform. He had large, watery eyes and a flushed red face. As he tore off Hudson's ticket he sniffed raspingly. Seeing the look on Hudson's face he said thickly—

"Hay fever. No cure for it." Then he stretched out his two arms before him in a wide V, each arm pointing down the two galleries of the museum. "Down there," he waggled his right arm, "natural history, fishes, flowers, birds and a two-headed foetus . . . children always go for it." He shook his head over the ghoulishness of children, and then waggled his left arm towards the corridor that ran darkly towards that part of the museum whose far windows overlooked the harbor. "Down there, archaeology, fossils, historical interest, peasant costumes, old coins . . ." He paused a moment and the hydrous eyes wavered with a sudden embarrassment. Hudson was reminded of a lugubrious spaniel, the baggy cheeks pulling at the flesh of the eyes to expose the red rims around the pupils . . . "Interesting old sedan chair." The head jerked towards the door and then came back, and the thick voice added in a whisper, "Was told not to let you miss it."

Hudson nodded, picked up his change and moved down the hallway. It was early in the afternoon still and the only other people in the place were a woman and a small boy at the far end of the natural history section. He lost sight of them as he turned down the other hallway. He moved swiftly for in a few moments his follower would be entering and he had no idea how much time he had before him.

He found the sedan chair halfway down the hall. It stood on a wide wooden plinth, looped off by a red rope, and placed in the center of the long hall. On either side of it, against the walls, were large pieces of broken statuary and friezes from some antique temple destroyed in the earthquake of 1664. The chair was painted black and red, with gilt bands at the ends of the long carrying handles. The little door at the front was shut and the faded brocade curtains were drawn across the one side window which Hudson could see. It was old and shabby with a dusty gentility, the fringe of tassels under the roof canopy still and heavy with twisted gold threads. A little plaque on the edge of the plinth read—

Sedan Chair, 18th Century. Used by Rectors of Dubrovnik for private and semistate occasions. Ceremonial chair still preserved in Rector's Palace.

The little side window, Hudson noticed, although covered by its brocade curtain was half-open. As he stood there he heard Sandro's voice from inside the chair; a whisper so low that it scarcely reached him.

"Signore . . ." Momentarily the little curtains parted and he saw Sandro's face.

Hudson gave a faint warning shake of his head, and turned round. He sat down on the edge of the wooden plinth, his back to the chair. His follower had bought his ticket and was coming down the gallery towards him. Unhurried, Hudson drew his sketch book from his pocket and opened it. His follower came towards him slowly, his eyes travelling reluc-

tantly over a collection of weapons strung along one wall. He stopped a couple of yards from Hudson and stared with sudden interest at a wooden figure dressed in the uniform of a Swiss Vatican guard. Hudson drew his pencil across the page, sketching in the frame of a sarcophagus panel which stood against the wall opposite. Without looking at the man he said gently—

"You aren't interested in churches or museums. They both send you to sleep. Why don't you carry a good book around with you for moments like this?"

The man turned, stared at him, lifted his head a little and saw that the far end of the gallery was empty. Then his attention went to the battle scene on the sarcophagus which Hudson was beginning to draw. Hudson held up his pencil, blocking off with his finger the dimensions of the panel.

"I shall be at least half an hour. Find yourself a good place to doze."

The man shifted uncomfortably and then, without a word, moved back the way he had come and Hudson saw him drop on to a chair near the door, cross his legs and rest his chin on his hand as he stared down the gallery.

Hudson sketched on. After a while, he whispered, keeping his head bent,

"He's watching but he can't hear. I mean to go on with the job Raikes started."

"How much do you know?" The voice was faint, a whisper detached from any corporeality.

"Raikes didn't tell me who the man at the hotel was. Do you know?" He began to line in a rearing horse.

"No."

"Raikes said he would give me something for the man to recognize. He never did."

"The police may have it now."

"Perhaps."

"You'll be on your own. I can't help. I'm leaving in six

days. If you find this man and he's at the right place I'll take him."

"How did they find where Raikes was?"

"I don't know . . ." The voice was hesitant.

"Sure? I only want to know there's no loose end."

"There's no need to worry." Sincerity had come back to the voice, but there was a hint of impatience which Hudson was quick to catch.

"What about the escape? Details, time, place . . ." His whisper died as the woman with the small boy turned down the gallery. He went on with his sketching assiduously, his head lowered, the legs of the oncoming pair visible. He looked up as they passed him and the boy cocked his head a little to look at his drawing but his mother drew him on, clucking irritably . . . "Why didn't you do it at home? I asked you before we came out." The boy muttered something, dancing a little in his impatience, and the two disappeared through a door marked *Nuznik*. As the door shut on them Sandro's voice came to Hudson.

"I've written it all down for you."

"Where?"

"It's under the notice about the chair."

Hudson shifted his position, easing his legs and saw that the notice was pasted on a narrow prism of wood that rested on the edge of the plinth.

"I'll get it in a minute. He keeps raising his head."

A ghost of a laugh filtered through the brocaded curtains. "I know him well. He's a good watchdog. When you've read it—get rid of it."

"Of course."

"You're not a regular agent?"

Hudson paused. The tiredness and the impatience meant strain. Raikes had warned him that Sandro was coming to the end of his tether.

"We'll get by."

The chuckle came again. "It doesn't matter."

The lavatory door opened and mother and child came out. Hudson raised his head and watched them curiously, meeting their looks frankly. They came up past him and as his head swung round to follow them he saw his follower watching as well. Then mother and child were between him and the follower, cutting off the man's line of vision for a while. Hudson put out his hand, pushed the lump of wood along and slid a folded sheet of paper into his pocket.

Sandro's voice came from the chair. "You choose your moments well. Sorry I can't help you about the man at the hotel."

"I'll find out who it is . . . somehow. And he'll be wherever you want him to be."

"It's all on the paper. Good luck."

Sandro said no more. Hudson got up and left the museum. Every moment that he kept Sandro's paper in his pocket he knew was dangerous. He went into the Gradska Kavana and ordered an iced coffee but before the waiter could bring it he got up and went across to the cloakroom. He shut himself in a cubicle and pulled out the paper. He read it carefully memorizing each detail. Then he set fire to it with a match and dropped the crisp roll of ash into the bowl. As it was flushed away he felt a sense of relief rise swiftly in him and for the first time he was aware that around the roots of his hair, beginning to bead his forehead now, he was sweating. He went out to the line of wash basins. He began to wash, watching in the mirror before him the deliberate movements of his follower who was wiping his hands in front of a basin on the other side of the room. The man stood there for a moment, contemplating his nails curiously, then his eyes met Hudson's in the mirror. Hudson smiled and gave him a wink.

At dinner that night as Hudson poured himself a glass of

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wine he noticed the book of Keats' poems on the table. He picked it up and opening it found a brief note from Professor Brussiak thanking him for the loan of the book. He looked across at the Professor who was being served by Joseph. He was hunched over his table, reading and eating, oblivious of the rest of the diners around him. Who was it, Hudson wondered, among these people, who was waiting to be told how to get out of this country; who was it who carried some sign which would be given in answer to the one which Raikes had promised him?

Professor Brussiak? Or Papa Ransko, who at this moment was slapping Madeo's hand which had reached out impatiently to the fruit bowl? Would Ransko leave his family, knowing what would happen to them? Hudson knew that he might; men can act from compulsions which force them to thrust all tenderness aside. Or was it Sumitch, the honeymoon journalist? Maybe this was no honeymoon, only the dreadful interregnum of a despair-shot embrace before farewell. He saw the young man light a cigarette for his wife, taking it from his own lips and passing it to her, and the movement was a caress, and for the first time Hudson looked closely at the girl and saw that she was good looking, her face pale, the dark eyes shadowed. She turned her head and for a second her eyes met Hudson's. Was she, he wondered, forcing herself to face him frankly, demonstrating to herself that there was a courage which could hold down the greatest fear? Then she turned away and bent forward to say something to her husband. Or was it Representative Djilas—a politician, not a trade union leader, as Hudson had now learned from the saturnine reception clerk—a man caught up in the dark tangle of factions which spread around Tito? Djilas was eating ice cream, his spoon picking at the pink mound as though somewhere in its depths he knew he would uncover something unpleasant. Or was it Colonel Grol—who at this moment had risen and was coming towards Hud-

son—the soldier favorite, the only man, Franja had told him the tale on the beach, at whose step Tito's German police dog, Tiger, did not growl. The broad bullet-head, the laughing blue eyes, hung above Hudson.

"May I take my coffee with you, Mr. Hudson? You look lonely, and I am lonely. We should do each other good."

Hudson nodded to the empty chair and Grol sat down, waving a hand at Joseph.

"Bring my coffee here, Joseph."

"Maybe Joseph could find some brandy as well?" Hudson looked up at the wrinkled, amiable face of the waiter. Joseph pursed his lips, hesitating as a good waiter should to show that a favor is never automatic.

"He can, I'm sure."

Joseph nodded. "There is a bottle of Grande Marque which seems to have found its way into the cellar. Do not ask me how."

"For me to be lonely is understandable," said Hudson over their brandy, "but I thought you had plenty of friends in this town."

Grol shook his head. "A man's lucky if he makes more than three friends in his life. Even acquaintances are hard to keep these days, unless you've got something to offer them."

Hudson smiled. "Do you class me as an acquaintance?"

"Why not?"

"And what have you to offer me?"

Grol laughed, shaking his big head. "What would you like, Mr. Hudson? A commission in the Red Army, the truth about the persecution of religious elements in this country, or an introduction to the prima ballerina of the State Corps de Ballet? I could even get you an interview with Stari himself—not that I think it would do you much good. You're not his type. Between ourselves, he likes men he can impress. What can I do for you? This brandy demands some return."

Hudson hesitated. There was a confidence about this man which was almost outrageous, a genial giant who liked to stalk through a crowded street and occasionally pick up a man and shake him, then set him back on the pavement with his head whirling and his thoughts churned up, a rough tonic which did them both good.

"You can give me some gossip," he said easily, offering his cigarette case.

"Why not? Women and soldiers are the greatest gossips in the world."

"I'd like your opinion of the rest of the guests in this hotel. Tell me something about them, anything which will make me seem to know them better. I sit here day after day like a stranger who's strayed by mistake into a funeral service."

Grol's roar of laughter roused the attention of the other diners for a moment. Then as their heads swung back he leaned forward and his big lips pushed against one another, savoring the pleasure he was about to give himself.

"What I know you shall have. But it isn't much. There's Brussiak—he's waiting here for the rest of a commission to turn up which is going to see what it can do about re-establishing the wine industry on the coast islands. Most of the vineyards were wiped out with phyloxera years ago. He doesn't look much but he has something. The chambermaid on the top floor has been sleeping with him for the last three nights. Surprising, isn't it?"

"I wouldn't like to say until I've seen the chambermaid."

Grol puffed a great cloud of smoke which hung heavy and opaque on the night air. "He's also fond of English poetry." He tapped the book which rested on the table. "I saw him return this when he came down to dinner."

"And Representative Djilas?" As he spoke Hudson was wondering how much this man did notice, how much was nonsense and how much truth.

"Fine partisan record. But a crank. Trying to reform the

spelling of our language. Wants to do away completely with the use of the old Cyrillic alphabet and use the Roman or what we call the Croatian form. He's right about that. One day he'll be shot for getting some idea that doesn't fit the Party line. Cranks never make good democrats. Then there's the Ransko family. Only human being among them is Madeo. He must be a changeling, I think, or else his mother slipped up sometime with a sailor in Split—that's where they come from. I think Ransko must suspect this too. Their room's next to mine and he beats her every other night, but she's big enough for it not to worry her too much."

Hudson finished his brandy and cocked an eye at him over the rim of his glass.

"You're giving good measure. But I don't believe it all."

Grol went on, unperturbed, grinning. "Why should you, Mr. Hudson? You asked for gossip, not truth. Then there are the turtledoves. He's a journalist. Don't let that loving smile of his deceive you. When he writes his pen nibs corrode after each paragraph. Bitter, bitter, bitter . . . But he's written the best war book of them all. *Red Star of the Mountains,* and his back is still scored with German lash marks. She's his second wife and she used to be a secretary in our London Embassy, but after a year they recalled her. No . . . not for any reason except that a year is about as long as any woman can stand in London or New York without deciding that she'd rather be fashionable and decadent than stick to short skirts and collectivism forever. Clothes will seduce any woman, Mr. Hudson, as every good soldier knows . . ." He paused, flicking at some loose ash on the breast of his tunic with a fastidious gesture. "And that's the lot, Mr. Hudson."

Hudson tried him deliberately, risking the touchiness which he guessed lay somewhere under the bluff personality. "No. You've missed one."

"I have? Who?"

"Yourself."

Colonel Grol did not laugh, and momentarily Hudson imagined he saw the tightening of some inner muscle mark the broad face with a faint hardness.

"I don't encourage gossip about myself, Mr. Hudson." Then the smile came back, disarming. "There's enough about already. And as for the truth about myself, I don't think you would find that very interesting."

"That's the trouble about truth, isn't it?" Hudson turned a knife over idly on the table, not looking at the man. "It's generally so uninteresting that it drives most of us to gossip . . ."

They stayed talking for a little while longer and then Hudson went up to his room. He stood at his window, smoking a last cigarette before bed. Unless Raikes, in that last moment on the island, had thrown away the thing he needed as a sign for whoever waited in this hotel, it lay now in Zarko's room, with the rest of Raikes' effects. At least he hoped it did. That was the trouble with this affair, one waited so much on probabilities. But one thing was certain he had to search that room. Just how he was going to get in without betraying himself was the problem that held back his sleep for a long time that night.

Lepovitch's report did not take long to write that evening.

. . . So far we have been unable to establish the identity of the dead man who was first mistaken for Raikes. Today fresh evidence has been discovered connecting him with the people in this town who were going to help Raikes. Zarko found on the first grave, when he visited the cemetery today, a posy of roses with an anonymous note of remembrance, written on the same blue paper as used in the letter which betrayed Raikes. The similarity in handwriting is clear.

. . . Hudson himself spends his time sight-seeing in the town, and sketching details of architectural interest. So far the girl, Franja Pazan, has reported nothing of interest. She is spending

the afternoon with him tomorrow and has been instructed to get him to talk about Raikes, but I personally feel that there is little hope of any help coming from this direction. There is always the possibility, too, that the girl is deceiving us. I have had to insist that her room is searched regularly . . .

He tossed the report aside, lit a cigarette and propped his feet on the table. He had had quite a battle with Zarko over the searching of the villa. Zarko had a sycophantic affection for Madame Androsh, member of a discredited aristocracy, which disgusted him by its obvious bourgeois origin. He had insisted that the villa be searched each morning when the old woman and girl were out marketing. He sat, swinging his chair gently on the balance of its two legs, his face thoughtful, the grey eyes blinking now and again behind the rimless glasses . . . No man was infallible. One day Zarko would make a mistake . . . for the moment he would content himself with the most circumspect insinuations against Zarko to Belgrade.

DAY EIGHT

From the Port Ploce they boarded a shabby little blue and white bus which swung out along the coast road, making an angry sound with its open exhausts, and rattled up over the shoulder of Mount Sergio to take the inland road towards Trebinje. The bus was crowded with country people returning from Dubrovnik to their villages in the hills. Now and again it stopped and little knots of passengers grappled with hampers, baskets, unsold hens and bundles of shopping tied up in blue cloth, then swung down on to the white road and stood waving as the bus moved on. At a stop not far from Dubrovnik, where the road ran through a narrow limestone defile, Franja and Hudson got down. They climbed for half an hour along a track that followed the boulder-lined course of a small stream until they reached a tiny plateau of grass, high above the defile, protected in a horseshoe of spruce and fir and with a view to the south which was notched by a jagged V of distant, opaline sea. A little way below them was a handful of houses, red-roofed, the plaster walls broken away here and there, grouped around a small, cobbled square. One of the houses, the inn, had a narrow verandah, roofed with a tortuous lacing of wistaria vines whose long purple-white racemes drooped over the tables and benches set out in its shade.

Hudson sat forward, hugging his knees and smoking. At one of the tables under the verandah, sprawled comfortably in a patch of sun, sat a man wearing a short blue workman's

blouse, rough grey trousers tucked into the tops of his thick boots and an old straw hat. A glass and a flagon of wine stood at his elbow. The moment the man had got on the bus in Dubrovnik he had guessed his purpose and this had opened up a line of thought which had kept Hudson silent during the bus ride and the climb up the mountain track.

Franja watched him, wondering what he was thinking about. His silence, unlike the silence of some people, was restful, and at this moment matched a quiet in her which she knew was unusual. The excursion had been his idea, and she had had been glad to come. But in the first few minutes of their meeting something had gone wrong and although she had been unable to put a name to the trouble, she knew it was there. She wondered if the instructions she had received from Zarko had created in her a falseness which took the brightness out of the afternoon.

She let her eyes run along the line of grey peaks across the valley, following the spur of firs that thrust downwards to the ragged cliff slopes above the white road. There was a loveliness about her country which always stirred memory in her heart. She remembered her father, walking with her, touching a flower but never picking it, and the sad, gentle poems he had written for her . . . acacia and wild musk, the moist glades of iris and peppermint, and her mother as tall and straight as a lily coming to her down a walk of pomegranate, the fire-red blossoms glowing against dark leaves and twisted branches. A patch of yellow pyrethrums at the edge of the plateau caught her eye, its color reminding her of the hair of the young German aviator who had held her hand as he died slowly in the ward of her Belgrade hospital. She had tried to talk to him, to give him the strength which he had not wanted, anxious to extend the coincidence which had brought them together, almost boy and girl, in Switzerland, and now found him shot down over the city she loved. But all he had said, knowing her thoughts, was, "*Schweig, oder*

rede etwas, das besser ist denn Schweigen." In love what was there better than silence? But now there was only silence.

The uncertainty of the future forced her to live in the moment, and to wrap herself in impossible dreams. But today even the dreams had deserted her. She had seen this afternoon as a surrender to the present, ready to be and to give whatever this man sitting by her expected. She reached out a hand and touched his bare arm as he leaned back, letting her finger follow for a second the long line of vein thrust into prominence by the strain as he rested his weight on his palms.

"Why are you so silent?"

Hudson turned and half-smiled. Then his eyes went back to the ragged notch of sea. The white body of a coast steamer was crawling across it, the wind drawing a thin antenna of smoke from its stack.

"I was thinking . . ."

"About what?"

Hudson turned and looked at her again and this time he settled himself full length on his elbow, watching her eyes. "I was thinking about you, wondering exactly what instructions Zarko had given you." He saw her start and sit up sharply and he knew he was not wrong, but the momentary flush of anger over her face roused a pity in him.

"What are you talking about?"

He shook his head. "You must know. I don't mind. And I'm not surprised. But let's be honest about it. Then we can enjoy ourselves."

She picked up his cigarette case from the grass and helped herself, and for a moment she found herself unable to capitulate, afraid that if she did everything would be lost.

"I told you that Zarko has given me no orders not to be friendly with you."

His smile irritated her, as he went on. "Why should he? But he has given you orders to be friendly, to watch me?"

"I came today because I wanted to be with you!" Her voice was emphatic, fighting still.

"I know you did, and I'm glad. Zarko understands that, too. That's why he's so clever. You want to be with me. I want you to be with me. So Zarko encourages it, but he must have given you orders. Look—" he pointed down the hill slope to the verandah of the inn. "That man sitting there is following me. When I met you at the bus he was there, all ready to get aboard. He was even wearing thick boots and sensible clothes for a country scramble. He knew what we were going to do because Zarko knew—and how did he know?"

She began to rise. Zarko had told her not to let him know that she was watching him. She hated Zarko, for the humiliation he had put on her, and she hated Hudson for forcing the unpleasantness into the open. Despair, which was nearer disappointment, urged her to go.

"If you believe this you must find my company disagreeable. I can find my own way back to the road."

Hudson looked up at her. Her mouth was hard, set in an angry twist, and the wind was drawing her thin dress against the firm lines of her body. Angry—more with herself than him, he guessed—she looked lovely, pale hair, pale blue eyes and the bright line of lips. He knew that the best way to handle her would have been to reach up and pull her down to him and kiss her, telling her not to be a fool, but it was a course denied to him. All the same he reached up and took her hand.

"I believe it," he said firmly. "But you know I don't find anything about you disagreeable. Let's be sensible. I know how things are in this country. I know that you hate having to do what Zarko tells you, but I don't blame you for doing it."

Franja was glad that he still kept his hand on her wrist, and now she was glad that he knew and that the barrier

which she had felt between them all the afternoon was gone. She sat down, relief relaxing her like a child dropping from a long run to gain its breath on the soft grass.

"I've felt beastly ever since he spoke to me."

"There's no need to. Forget about it. I wouldn't have said anything. But I thought it was better to have it out of our systems."

He leaned over her and smiled and seeing her lips so close he wanted still to kiss her.

She said nothing, smiling back at him, and a warmth for him stirred in her making forgetfulness easy. She wanted him to lower his head and kiss her, she wanted to feel his arms about her and to bury her head into him and hold on to the present with a surrender which would cheat Time. She could have this moment, these few days, move through them in a fantasy of her own creation, paying no heed to the future which had nothing to offer . . . so she lay, waiting, her lips parted, her eyes telling him her thoughts. But instead of kissing her, he raised his hand and touched her cheek, rubbing his knuckles against the softness in a caress which revealed nothing, and then very quietly, rolling back on to the grass, staring up at the sky, he said—

"You look like a princess, too. *La belle au bois dormant* . . . And princesses are not for ordinary mortals . . ." He went on talking, half to himself. "This is no world for princesses, no world for beauty to awaken in . . . The spell must go on for a long time yet, and the sleeping creatures of legend sleep on until the time comes when the world is ready again for them . . ."

"I don't understand . . ."

His hand came across, taking hers and momentarily her disappointment receded.

"I think you do . . . Your father was a poet, a poet's daughter must understand. It wasn't any man's kiss which could wake the sleeping princess." He laughed gently. "I think we

ought to go down and have a glass of wine with our friend below."

"I'd rather stay here." She was reluctant to move, unwilling to lose the touch of his hand on hers, and then from the growth of anxiety which had slowly formed in her, proving an affection and warmth for him stronger than the disappointment which had assailed her for a moment, she said gently, "You're not really in trouble with Zarko, are you?"

He was silent for a while, considering. He could have trusted her with the truth, he was sure of that, but there was a strength in Zarko which could tear the truth from her. He would have liked her to know the truth. It would be good to talk it over with someone, but he knew he was not going to talk, just as he was not going to kiss her. He had to keep all feeling for her at a level which would leave him free to do what he had to do, and leave her, when the time came, without any claim on him. He spoke casually, his tone implying that there was nothing to be gained in extending the subject—

"It's a case of mistaken identity chiefly. I'm an engineer and he thinks I'm a British agent."

Zarko came with Hudson to the door of his apartment, and the two men shook hands. For that evening all suspicion between them had been dropped. Hudson had been invited to dinner in the flat which had once been the home of a shipping magnate, a descendant of those merchant venturers who, in the days when Dubrovnik had been Ragusa and Venice a great power, had sent their ships all over the world. Now it was an apartment house, crowded with families.

Hudson had eaten well. He liked Madame Zarko, a comfortable, kitchen-bound wife who had never doubted that a good sauce would hold a man more surely than a saucy smile. Their daughter, a serious twelve, who sometimes forgot herself and laughed with a high whinnying delight, had carried on an unintelligible conversation with him in English about

the works of an author she referred to as "Shot" and which it took him some time to realize was Scott. As he had never read a line of Scott he was at a double disadvantage, but no one seemed to mind. After supper they had played spillikins, and drunk cherry brandy and they had all been so kind and unaffected that he had found it difficult to remember what lay between him and Zarko. Zarko must have been aware of his feelings, for as he now said goodbye, standing at the head of the bare stairway, dimly lit by a single bulb, he said genially—

"Inside that door, I am with my family. The policeman does not exist. We have been very happy to have you."

Hudson expressed his own pleasure, and then as the door shut behind Zarko he began to make his way slowly down the stairs. He felt suddenly ashamed of a decision he had made before entering the apartment that night. Inside, he had maintained the status of a guest. Outside, on his own again, he was a man with a purpose, ruthlessly prepared to take advantage of any opportunity which would help him to defeat Zarko. But even so, he was not pleased with the situation. There was too much goodness in Zarko and his family, and enough decency in himself to make it plain that the way life forced them to act, when issues larger than personal ones were involved, was fundamentally base. Then he remembered Raikes, and the many other things he had seen in this country, and his mind settled once more to an unshaken decision. Once started, one had to go forward.

He paused at the turn of the stairway on the second floor, and then went down, making no noise. At the turn a flight below he leaned over the rail and saw in the meagerly lit hallway the figure of a man sitting on a chair against the wall. The man was bunched up, head resting on his hands, and he was reading. Hudson smiled. It was his watcher. The night was blowing up with rain clouds from the Adriatic and it was colder than it had been for some days. The man had come

inside the house to wait for him to reappear. Even a visit to Zarko did not save him from surveillance. He stood for a moment, considering his line of action and somewhere in the night he heard a church clock strike the half-hour after ten.

Drawn back into the shadows of the landing at the head of the stairs, Hudson watched the man for a while. It was not the man who had followed his excursion with Franja, but his old friend with the patched shoe, and he was settled into a comfortable position, absorbed in his book. Hudson smiled, as he pulled on his gloves. He had come to like the man and, inwardly, he now apologized to him for what he was about to do.

He crossed to the narrow window which lighted the landing, pushed the catch on it and gently raised the lower half. Outside the night was dark and starless, a heavy press of clouds hanging low over the town. He slipped out on to the small balcony that ran along the side of the building and then shut the window behind him. Twelve feet below him were the sloping cobbles of the dark ulica which ran up towards the church of Sveti Jacov. He moved along the balcony quietly to the corner of the building. He paused for a moment, watching the dark stretch of cobbles, lit by a pale street light from its far end, and then swung over the balustrade, groping with his legs for the slim pillar which supported the balcony. A few seconds later he was in the alleyway. He stood pressed against the pillar, waiting, but there was no sound of movement in the night. Quietly, keeping to the shadows as much as he could, he moved away, working quickly up hill towards the church. As he stood at the alley mouth, the church facing him across the lighted street, a party of youths came by arm in arm and singing gently, no patriotic song but a plaintive Serbian folk song whose echoes fell back lazily from the face of the dark buildings. Hudson let them pass, drawn back into a doorway, and then, unhurried, alive to the movement and noise of the night, aware of

the heightening tension in himself, the dryness of his hands thrust deep into his raincoat pocket, he crossed the road towards the small side door of the church.

Inside the door, darkness engulfed him, its quality so different from the darkness of the streets that he stood waiting for his senses to adjust themselves to the warm, incense-burdened blackness. A small draught, set up by the opening of the door, spent itself wearily, raising brittle, whispering complaints from the loose sheets of notices pinned to the wall at his side. Ahead of him, dwarfed, lonely in the long perspective of shadows, a small light on the altar struggled out of the gloom, like the light of a boat far out at sea. Hudson held the light, setting his course by it and went forward, one hand thrust out to fend off the obstruction of pillar or casually disposed chair as he crossed the chancel. As he worked around behind the altar, making for the little door in the choir which led to the stairs that rose to the bell tower, a remote disturbance in his mind gradually defined itself into an unreasonable conviction that things were going too well so far to promise good.

Climbing the tower seemed to take an age. He came out into the little square of turret under the dark shape of the hanging bell. He sat down on the low parapet and took off his shoes, and then, seeing his fingers trembling, a movement which cost him an effort to control, he was suddenly angry with the stupidity of the whole situation. For the first time he was experiencing the sick apathy which he had noticed among the men who long ago he had helped to escape. It came over them at the moment which preceded the first step into darkness, on the threshold of action, and there had been a strength in their apathy which had sometimes called for the physical pressure of a hand on the back to start them moving, a reluctance framed in the phrase which had initiated so many escapes, "For Christ's sake, we must get moving. We can't hang about here all night. Let's go!"

He put his shoes down in a corner, tidily, almost as though he were retiring to bed, and then swung a leg over the parapet. It was dark and still up here. Far below him the sheen of the town lights was reflected in the harbor, and away over towards Mount Sergio there was a stippling of house lights.

He turned, holding to the parapet and lowered himself, his feet reaching out for the long ridge of the roof below. With his toes just touching it, he released himself and dropped, squatting on all fours like a cat, and a loose tile slid away from under his hand and rattled down the long pent. He saw it going, sliding unevenly and he prayed hard that the gutter would hold it. If it went over the side and smashed into the road it would explode on the hard stone like a small bomb. The tile hit the gutter and rested there. Hudson breathed and then, not daring to risk the turn which would bring his face towards the far wall which was the side of the Police Headquarters, he began to move backwards along the spine of the roof, facing the belfry always but slowly drawing away from it. He went slowly, one hand, one foot, one hand, one foot. He knew he must look a damn silly sight with his head lowered and his bottom raised like a scared, retreating cat, and the corners of his mouth turned with a smile which reflected suddenly the fantasy of the whole episode. A thing which was so ludicrous could hold no danger. The fifteen yards of roof took him four minutes. As his foot touched the far wall, he felt that he had lived through four years.

He stood up cautiously and turned. For a moment he lay with his hands against the wall, his face pressed against the plaster still warm from the sun's heat, and drew long, steady breaths.

Above him was a small balcony outside the window of Zarko's room. It was no more than three feet long and about a foot wide, a curving sweep of ironwork rising from the stone sill. He reached up and tried one of the iron stays. It was

firm under his pull. He grasped another and drew himself up with both hands.

The outside shutters of the window were folded back. He tried the double windows but they were on a catch. He took out his penknife and probed between the frame until under his knife, he felt the catch move upwards and with a light push one side of the windows opened. He stepped into a darkened room and closed the window behind him.

Momentarily he stood, letting his breathing even down, listening. On the stairs somewhere, he knew, there would be a sentry, and down below in the general office the night clerks and police would be stirring. But here in the room there was no sound at all. Only from under the far door came a pale line of light, hardly perceptible. He moved across to the door and tried it. It was locked.

From his pocket he took his torch and laid it on the mantelshelf, its light cutting across one corner of Zarko's desk, directed away from the window. Behind the desk, against the wall, was a row of filing cabinets and at their side on the floor the green box from which, days before, Zarko had taken out and shown him the things which had been found on the body they had at first believed was Raikes'. Zarko, he thought, as he lifted the box on to the desk, was a methodical little man. None of Raikes' effects would go off to the Embassy until the case was cleared up, and, he was sure—his confidence, in fact, the force which had brought him here—that anything which had been on Raikes' body at the time of his death on the island, would be now in the box. The box, a light wooden affair, was locked but he knew it would give him no trouble. Detail observed when Zarko had first lifted the box on to his desk, served him now. It was fastened by an ordinary hasp, through the loop of which a small padlock had been secured. He turned it over and with a small screwdriver he had brought, he unscrewed the two screws that held the top part of the

hasp to the lid. It fell away as the screws came out, and he lifted the lid.

He laid the contents out on the desk one by one, their place and order in the box remembered against their return. He recognized the things which Zarko had originally shown him; a blue shirt, grey flannel trousers, leather sandals, a wallet, a crumpled red silk handkerchief, a penknife and a set of poker dice advertising Martini Rossi vermouth. None of these would help him, for whatever Raikes had meant to give him he had carried on him at that moment of their parting on the island. He kept the old things to one side. The additions to the box were few. The shirt and trousers which Raikes had been wearing . . . he turned the shirt over quickly, unwilling to see for long the bullet-scorched holes in it . . . a pair of worn brown shoes, a filthy white handkerchief, a ten-dinar piece, a hundred-dinar note, a crumpled packet of cigarettes, a pair of sunglasses, a short piece of pencil and a signet ring.

He picked up the ring and carried it closer to his torch. If the thing he wanted was in the box, this was most likely to be it. He had to take it. Under the torchlight, he saw that it was a heavy, gold ring and on the broad facet of the signet was engraved a design showing a stork, wings half-spread as it prepared for flight, and in its long beak it held a snake, its body twisted into the shape of an angry S.

As he stood there he heard the sudden clang of heavy boots on the stone stairway at the end of the passage outside the room. He stood still. The footsteps clattered down the passage and then he heard the click of a heavy door and then there was silence. His attention still drawn by the nearness of another presence he reached out for his torch, and the movement was blind. His fingers touched the torch clumsily and the metal cylinder rolled slightly. His fingers groped after it, catching at it before it could fall, but in the urgency of the movement there was clumsiness. His elbow hit something on

the mantelshelf which toppled over. He grabbed at it with his free hand, but was too late. Zarko's little pot of flowers hit the carpet just clear of the fireguard with a heavy, muted crash.

Hudson stood unmoving, his ears strained for any sound from beyond the door. The silence gave him only the beating of his own heart. Slowly he swung the torchlight to the floor. The small pot was cracked clean in half and the flowers lay smashed on the carpet, the pot-shaped pad of earth about the roots broken away on one side.

This was the unforeseen thing no forethought could ever avoid, the triviality which could force the shape of the future. He stood, considering the implications of the broken pot, and how they might affect him. A broken pot might be blamed on a careless cleaner. If, however, it were proved that some stranger must have done it, it would lead Zarko to search his room. The disappearance of the ring would tell him too much.

Hudson knew that he dared not take the ring. He went back to the desk and began to return the ring and the other objects to the box. He worked quickly but carefully, and his thoughts were outside the room, occupied with the possibilities of the future, wondering how he could manage without the ring, seeing clearly in his mind the engraved stork and the angry coil of the snake . . . He screwed the hasp back into position and replaced the box. As he stood up, he heard from deep below in the building the sudden note of a telephone bell ringing. Then, from the lower slopes of the town, by the harbor, he heard the clocks begin to chime eleven, one following the other with a belated hastiness. He had been away a half-hour. He straightened up and then moved away to the window. From the outside it took him a few minutes to manipulate the catch with his knife to get it back in position but in the end it was done. He turned to face the climb back across the roof.

Half an hour later he was safely back through the window on to the landing above the hall in the apartment house. Down below the watcher still sat hunched over his book. Hudson went quietly down. He moved across to the man, and saw that he was gently asleep. Hudson passed him and went to the door. It was locked. He rattled the handle impatiently and the man woke with a start. He looked stupidly across at Hudson and his expression changed. Then almost automatically his eyes turned away and he glanced at his wrist watch, noting the time. It was just after half past eleven.

"Wake up—we must be going," Hudson said, grinning.

The man smiled faintly. Almost against his will he was beginning to like this Englishman. Generally he found it wise to have no feelings about the people he followed. It kept his work emotionally uncomplicated. He pulled a key from his pocket, unlocked the door and stood aside for Hudson to move out. A spurt of rain flecked across Hudson's face as he stood on the steps, the first whip of a passing shower.

"You should have brought a coat," he said over his shoulder. The man gave no answer and Hudson walked on, and behind him the man followed, turned his jacket collar against the soft rain, isolated now by the twenty yards between them, absorbed in himself once more, knowing that if his jacket got soaked the shoddy material would shrink, knowing that by the time he got home, Hudson would be long in bed. For him there would be waiting an irritable wife, an indifferent supper and no sleep until he had heard all the complaints of the day which his wife had saved for the hour of twisting and turning under the thin sheets . . .

Milo Lepovitch disliked rain. He had turned his back to the window after drawing the curtains to shut out the sound and the sight of the wet reflections on the black glass. Two years ago, on a night like this of rain, his wife had had her first hemorrhage, and he had gone out, frantic with urgency,

to find a doctor. The rain had licked at his face and hands . . . Today, he had received a letter from his wife at the Sanatarium, and there was no doubt that she was going to get better. For once he was grateful to the authorities and the social force which inspired them. In the old days she would have died, for he could never have afforded the treatment she was now getting free and as a right of any citizen . . . For a while he was almost a Communist. He kept his report short for he was eager to write to his wife.

. . . I understand that Minister of National Economy Kidrich has returned to Belgrade. This means that Hudson's official business will be cleared quickly and he will be leaving here. If anything is going to happen, it must take place in the next two or three days before he goes . . .

. . . Tonight Zarko has taken the unconventional step of having Hudson to dinner. What he hopes to gain from it I cannot conceive, but my position here gives me no authority over Comrade Zarko . . .

. . . Attached for your files is a complete summary of our progress to date, together with copies of all subsidiary reports from watchers, etc. and also a set of photographs of Hudson, taken without his knowledge at various times, for your files . . .

DAY NINE

Zarko was in a bad temper. He had reason to be, he thought: every reason in the world. People were clumsy, and people were liars, and they were liars usually because they were afraid. He knew the old woman was afraid, afraid of him, afraid of losing her job, ready to swear herself into purgatory rather than admit her fault . . . and oddly, he didn't blame her. He blamed himself for not having made clear that he was the kind of man it was easier and wiser to be frank with. Nevertheless, she was a damned, clumsy hag.

The sentry who had been on duty early that morning knew he was angry, and while he stood stiffly to attention before the desk, he was praying gently, not without an inner touch of humor at the spectacle of his chief so upset over a miserable pot of calceolarias, that none of the anger would come back at him. Zarko looked up and something in the absurd stiffness of the man's body irritated him.

"Stand at ease, man. Stand at ease."

The sentry relaxed into an easy discomfort.

"Now what exactly happened?"

Habit stiffened the sentry as he began to speak.

"She reported for duty at six as usual, Comrade Zarko. I brought her up and I unlocked the door. I didn't come in. I have no orders to. I went back to the head of the stairs. A few minutes later she comes along and tells me that the pot of flowers is broken. She said she didn't do it—she'd found it like that. But you know what these cleaners are like."

"Did you hear it fall?"

"No, Comrade Zarko. I wouldn't from the top of the stairs. We've kept her below. If you want to see her . . ."

Zarko could imagine her downstairs, shivering with fright, more determined than ever not to have the truth dragged out of her, and over his anger he was suddenly sorry for her. Her life was hard enough without his bullying her into the truth . . .

"No, no . . . send her home." He dismissed the man and as he moved to the door, called after him. "Tell Denje I'm ready for him now."

He sat back in his broad chair, his anger still with him, yet relishing with another part of his mind the relief which he knew would take the old woman in a few moments. Stupid hag . . . if only she had come to him and apologized and told the truth she would have gained the same result and he, perhaps, would not have been half so angry. People never knew, never understood the right thing to do . . . His thoughts were interrupted by the entry of Denje.

Zarko nodded a good morning to him and got up from his chair, starting habitually towards the mantelshelf where the flowers usually stood, then turning away and going slowly to the window. Denje sat down in the chair to which Zarko had waved him, crossed his legs carefully, eyed the patch on his right shoe with expressionless vacancy, and wondered—for the story was all round the building—just how much of Zarko's bad temper would come his way.

"Well, anything?" Zarko spoke without turning, staring across at the belfry of Sveti Jacov.

Denje rustled the two sheets of paper he held in his hand.

"Nothing interesting. Shall I read it?"

Zarko laughed suddenly, a dry, bitter laugh. "No. I can make it up for myself better than you can. 'I followed . . . he went . . . between so-and-so and so-and-so he lit a cigarette . . .

wiped his nose . . .' You've got a literary gift about as satisfying as biscuit crumbs, Denje . . ."

Denje stirred, not at the criticism which he knew to be true, but at the impatience in the old man's voice. There were going to be some sharp answers about this morning. Any man who was wise would go out of his way to humor him.

"I'll put it in the files, shall I?" Denje stirred the sheets apologetically.

"You could put it in the stove for all the good it is. Why the hell doesn't the man do something we can get hold of? Or perhaps he does, eh? And we're too damned dull to notice it." Zarko turned round, angry still, but now with Hudson, and with Denje. He couldn't bully the old woman, but a little bullying of Denje would do neither of them any harm.

"Maybe."

Apologetic again, Denje's voice momentarily softened Zarko. There wasn't any satisfaction either in bullying Denje.

"I suppose he went straight back to his hotel after he left my place at half-past ten?"

Something stuck in Denje's mind, making him hesitate and momentarily he looked up at Zarko, a stupid frown crossing his face. The hesitation and the stupid look brought back all Zarko's irritation; he was an angry little boy furious because a favorite toy had been smashed and he struck out.

"Well, did he? You didn't go to sleep and miss him, did you?" The phrase was vicious, threatening, and Denje, thinking of his own skin, unable to comprehend all that was involved, but well aware now of what was wrong, knew that there was no point in arguing about times with Zarko in his present mood. He said quietly, shaking inwardly and already deciding to alter his report when he got downstairs, "Yes, of course he did, Comrade Zarko. He went straight home after coming down from you."

"Then why the devil didn't you say so at once when you're asked?"

A few seconds later Denje was going thoughtfully down the stairs to the main office As he passed the sentry, the man nodded back up the stairs and said wryly—

"I wouldn't like to step on his toes this morning."

Denje smiled, but as he passed on he was thinking more of Hudson than Zarko. He no longer had any comfortable feeling about him. He disliked him, for he had a growing feeling that the Englishman had done him a great wrong. And that evening, when his wife began her complaints in bed, for the first time in his life he smacked her head sharply and told her to shut up—and was amazed when she did.

They came up the steps from the small landing stage at the foot of the hotel, through the still, noon heat of the garden to the dining terrace. Joseph helped Franja to her chair and when he was gone Hudson leaned forward on his elbows, smiling at her. Franja met his look openly and for a moment —as though there were some joke they both shared—she smiled too. Then she turned her head, watching a small, lacquer-winged fly that hovered with fantastic precision and energy at the mouth of a jasmine bloom on the trailing pergola vinery. Each day, she reflected, brought a new term to their relationship, but the inevitable thought invaded her mind that his progression in this relationship was almost certainly not the same as hers. The day before she had been prepared to cheat time and truth in order to preserve an illusion of happiness . . . and he had refused to help her. She knew now that she was in love with him and preparing for herself a pain more enduring than any happiness that might come from it. She knew that he was not in love with her. She wondered if he would have been if their position had been different and he could have seen some way of overcoming the difficulties that ringed them. Love for him, she

guessed, must hold the promise of a future . . . It would have been easier for her if she could have matched that feeling. But the strength did not exist in her. She was in love with him now, and the fact that it was hopeless only increased her love and made it necessary to conceal it. She turned back to him now, and said quietly—

"You've hardly said a word all the way over. Is something bothering you?"

The smile became broader, and after a pause he nodded, but she knew that he was not going to give her the truth.

"Yes. Your hat."

She laughed, raising her hand for a moment to the back of her head.

"Don't you like it?"

Hudson laughed. "It's absurd, it's delicious, and it's absolutely you—but it doesn't belong to this country. It's not proletarian. Some genius wandering down a country lane in some other country must have snatched a handful of flowers, gathered a few wisps of loose straw from a passing hay cart . . . and there it is."

"The genius was a Frenchman and the country lane was the Rue Saint Honoré. I got it from a friend in exchange for two dozen eggs. The mother of our first violinist keeps a farm. Do you know Paris?"

"Yes."

They were talking now, going into the past, outside this country, because both of them felt instinctively that there they were on safer ground and could maintain the pleasant isolation which seemed necessary to preserve their relationship. But under all their talk, Hudson knew that his attention was not entirely with her. He was talking defensively, his words and laughter a barrier that inclosed his real problem, and that problem nothing to do with her. For a moment when she had come across the quay to his waiting rowboat, he had felt his attention leap up, stimulated by the sight of

her and recognizing the pleasure which each new appearance evoked in him. When a woman began to come closer to one, she had that power. Like the sky which was always the sky, but each day produced some new change in color and mood. The absurd hat, and the wide swinging skirt and jacket of some light pale blue material, had brought him a new Franja, young, radiant, the fair hair elegant with an arranged good behavior which had been agreed upon by her and it for the duration of this meeting, as though they both conspired to the effect, amused by it secretly.

But in the boat, while the old man rowed, he had dropped back into his thoughts, watching the bone-grey rocks of Lokrum sliding by on the starboard, the thick oaks like a rough pile that changed shade in the passing airs. That morning at breakfast he had watched the other guests. When his coffee was finished he had got up and strolled across to Colonel Grol. Passing the others, his eyes had seen nothing but hands, long white feminine hands, broad brown hands, and stubby hair-backed paddles . . . even the thin, vein-lighted child's hands of Madeo and his brother. But there was no signet ring, no crowned stork holding a hissing snake. Whoever had the counterpart of Raikes' ring did not mean to wear it in sign until the first ring was shown. And the problem of revelation was one which teased at his mind, confined his thoughts to a narrow orbit and made existence outside as remote and unimportant as another world. Even now, as they ate and talked, his words and Franja's light voice seemed to echo, dream-like, and without conviction.

She was talking of England now. She had spent a year with friends there, and had come to love the English countryside. He listened, discounting a little the enthusiasm for his own country as every Englishman does when it is praised, and his eyes were beyond her, watching the other diners. They were all there, and for a moment he saw Madeo turn and wave a spoon at him. He smiled absently and hardly noticed

the outreached arm of the father as Madeo was swung round. Colonel Grol, the Sumitchs, Dr. Brussiak, Representative Djilas . . . all busy with the *vol-au-vent de volaille* which had begun life as rabbit in the wooden hutches under the terrace . . .

Franja sensed he was not with her and was puzzled. She tried to draw him back, insisting, and something in her voice suddenly disturbed him. He looked at her, and then with an apologetic smile said—

"I'm sorry, I was daydreaming. Unforgivable." Then taking up her question: "No. I don't like London either. I was brought up in the country, in an old Tudor farmhouse . . . a lovely house. I think it was that which first made me want to be an architect."

"But you're an engineer."

"I know. That came later. There's always one thing which you want to be and which you never are."

She saw him as a boy, and the picture drew her and raised a nostalgic tenderness in her. When she had been in England he had been there, somewhere close, and she felt cheated that not once had she been aware of him.

"What was it like . . . the house? And you . . . as a boy. I can't imagine you." But she could, she saw him clearly.

Hudson pushed his coffee away and then, touched by her eagerness, he took the menu card and under the badly typed legend of dishes began to draw.

"Like this . . ." He sketched the house, the sway-backed tiled roof, the gables and the weathered corbels and long oak studs against the lozenged cream plaster, the curved line of rose beds and the sloping lawn that ran down to a rush-fringed pond. Franja watched him, pleased by the sureness of his line, and—unable to draw herself—comfortably envious of his gift, wishing for a moment that she could do as well.

He handed it to her, a little sketch at the bottom of the card. The place was real, and the shade under the tall trees

at the side of the house cool and full of the sound of bees and flies about the great horse-chestnut candles.

"It's lovely . . . but I don't see you."

Hudson took the card back and added something to it, passing it back to her.

Franja laughed. "Is that you?"

"Yes—don't you recognize me? There were carp in the pond. I spent hours trying to catch them."

And curiously, the few rough lines were him, she knew that. Something in the stance . . . Then she knew she was being more foolish than she could bear. The figure was only a rough figure, not him, not anything . . . Only to her was it him. She pushed the card back across the table, her smile slow, and concealing all she felt. When they left, she knew, she would take the card. When he had gone, she would have it . . . a few pencil marks, a hunched expectant boy's figure at the edge of a pond . . .

Hudson took the card up, rubbing the ball of his thumb against the stiff edge.

"My aunt won prizes for her roses at the Chelsea Flower Show. She put greenfly and Hitler in the same group . . ." He was silent suddenly, for the thought had occurred to him that he would like to show her the house, to have her meet his aunt . . . but he knew that even in the idleness of the suggestion there would have been a cruelty that neither she nor he deserved. He pulled out his case and gave her a cigarette, and it was as he lit his own and sat back that he became aware of Madeo.

The small boy was standing at the side of his table, staring expectantly at him. The plump face was composed, unabashed, the fair hair flecked with a few petals of the blossoms which shed themselves from the overhead tracery. Hudson glanced over to the Ransko table. The mother and father were engaged in a discussion with Joseph. The other

child was leaning over the balustrade dropping the cherry stones from his dessert to the garden below.

Madeo pointed to the menu card propped against the water carafe, and said—

"Nice. Do drawing for Madeo. Big drawing." His little hands described a circle.

Hudson chuckled. "Madeo's a fan of mine." Then to Madeo, "You'd better go back to your father."

"No, no." Madeo's curls whirled away from his head like agitated mop ends. "Big drawing."

Hudson shrugged his shoulders. "I do him a drawing—and then he takes it round to all the tables and makes them pay a tribute. He never shares with me."

"You can't disappoint him." Franja handed Madeo a slice of apple from her plate and he pouched it without a word.

Hudson turned the menu card over to its blank side and took out his pencil. As his hand rested for a moment on the card he suddenly felt his heart begin to beat strongly and was curiously aware that the excitement in him had outstripped by a second the slower movement of thought which was now coming through. He drew carefully and when he handed the card to Madeo he knew that he was outwardly calm.

"There you are—that ought to get you enough to ruin your digestion for the rest of the day."

Madeo, Hudson's words lost on him, took the card and stared at it noncommittally for a second. Then a smile broadened on his face and he nodded. "Nice. Nice big bird with worm." And he was gone trotting off to the other tables.

"What a curious thing to draw!" Franja's comment was idle, hardly curious. "A stork wearing a crown, and holding a snake."

"Madeo likes the fantastic. He isn't content with cats or steam engines . . ." His eyes were on the child.

Dr. Brussiak glanced at the proffered card, patted Madeo and handed him a biscuit. The boy passed his own table, un-

seen by his arguing parents who held Joseph still in debate. Hudson watched him make the rounds. The card was shown, the tribute was taken, and Hudson knew that each party would know who had done the drawing, for the performance had been played before more than once. But as he watched, he felt disappointment growing in him. No eye turned to him, no movement for a moment gave any indication that the heraldic symbol had struck a responsive chord. Grol, the Sumitches, Djilas . . . their interest was on the boy. And it was as Madeo left Djilas that his mother discovered what was happening.

"Madeo!"

Grinning, Madeo came trotting back to their table, waving the card, and already started on the mastication of his tributes.

Papa Ransko picked the boy up and dropped him into his chair and momentarily as he took the card, glancing at the drawing, he shot an angry glance at Hudson. His wife drew the card from him, snorted at it and then, with an angry phrase to Madeo tossed it on to the table where it slid along the stiffly ironed cloth to the floor.

"I'm in trouble again," said Hudson. "The Ranskos don't like me. I'm a bad influence on the child . . . or maybe it's just because I'm English . . ." But as he spoke his eyes were still drawing the rest of the company. To one of them the stork might have meant something, but there was nothing, not even a curious glance, not a shrug of a back or reflective settling of a body in a chair to give him any sign.

Joseph came to their table and dropped the card in front of Hudson.

"The menu, monsieur." There was a half-smile on the broad, lined face, a twist to the mouth which implied sympathy. "Would mademoiselle like some more coffee?"

Franja shook her head. "I must be going. I have an appointment."

As they stood up there was the sound of a slap from the Ransko table, and a wail from Madeo. Joseph went forward to mop up the coffee which the boy had spilled. Hudson watched, smiling, and in that moment Franja quietly slipped the card into her bag.

Hudson went down with her to the landing stage. He would have gone back with her, but some compulsion held him to the hotel. Whoever waited for him must be given every chance to come forward, and time now was getting short. He arranged to see Franja the next day, and then watched the boat draw away, the slim blue figure rocking and swaying as the boatman laid to the oars, an arm raised to wave and then the movement changing abruptly as she laid a hand on her hat to hold it against the wind which was freshening. Something in the movement brought a warmth into him. He wished now that he had been better company, and remembering her as she lay back on the grass of yesterday he wished that he had never met Madame Androsh so that he might have leaned forward and kissed her. She had wanted to be kissed—why he hadn't met her mood he now found difficult to understand. She wasn't a princess, she was a girl, and she had wanted to be kissed.

He sat in the palm walk for a while smoking, looking up to the terrace now and again, seeing that the diners were going. They knew where he was, and if he were right in his guess that the ring was what Raikes had intended to give him, they would come. If no one came . . . there was nothing he could do more. Everything would be finished. Sandro would go off to Italy alone, and Raikes would be dead, and the man to be rescued would turn some other way, disappointed, seeking another channel . . . and Zarko would sit back in his chair, rubbing his hands.

Later he went to the lounge and took tea, leafing through the magazines, staring at the photographs of Tito taking the salute at a parade, Tito talking to peasants, Tito getting into

his special train, Tito, Tito, Tito . . . and the great red stars, and the sickle and hammer, the enormous banners with the monster faces of Tito, Stalin . . . and always the march past of the same automatons . . . The People's this and the People's that, the solidarity and the unity . . . And the only thing which broke the monotony of the afternoon was Colonel Grol who came and shared tea with him and passed him a copy of *Femmes Nues.*

At half-past seven, in the browning evening light which gave house and gardens and the distant island the appearance of a badly developed print, he went along to take dinner with Madame Androsh. She had brought up her last bottle of sherry, a *Tio Pepe,* dry and old maidenish on the tongue, and recognizing his mood she talked little before dinner, playing him some records of old Macedonian folk songs. And at dinner, which they took on the terrace, there was half a bottle of Barsac. He helped her to clear the table afterwards, and stood with her in the kitchen while she made the coffee. They came back to the terrace and she settled herself in her chair, drawing over her bare shoulders a hand-painted scarf, the movement and the colors for a moment calling to mind the slow, exotic spread of a peacock greeting the coolness of the dusk.

"I'm sorry Franja couldn't be here," she said after a while.

"She missed a very good omelette."

"I used six eggs. Do you know the value of eggs in this country?"

"They're scarce, I know."

"Very. Franja and I have been very extravagant with eggs on your behalf."

He blew a cloud of smoke towards a hatch of dancing midges and watched them break and scatter, then, as the drift thinned, reform and take up the giddy dance.

"I don't understand."

"She bartered two dozen for a hat this morning. The importance of a hat to a woman is something which no man can hope to understand fully."

"The one she wore at lunch with me?"

"Yes. Did you realize its importance?"

"Should I?"

Men were all the same, she thought, ready with some obvious evasion, not wanting to give themselves away before you did.

"You know she's in love with you, don't you?"

He flicked his cigarette away. Yes, he knew it, though it made him uncomfortable to have it stated so frankly.

"There's nothing I can do about it."

"Why not?"

He laughed quietly. "You yourself told me why not."

Madame Androsh stood up and the rustle of her gown was a faint sigh in the growing darkness.

"I'm disappointed. I thought you were falling in love with her."

"I'm sorry."

"I'd hoped you were. Then you would have taken her with you."

"But that would have been impossible."

"Why?"

"You know as well as I do that the authorities would never let her leave the country."

"There are other ways—less official."

She paused for a moment, watching him. He was drawn back now into a hard immobility, waiting, and the controlled caution in him made her smile. "I understand from Zarko that he has more than a suspicion that you are, in fact, going to help someone else to leave this country . . . unofficially."

He looked at her sharply, and then said cautiously, "Zarko's an amusing man. I like him, but I don't share all his beliefs."

She persisted. "If it were true, and if you did love Franja—you could arrange it, couldn't you?"

Hudson stood up. He took her arm, moving with her to the edge of the terrace. A bed of white tobacco flowers pocked the darkness with a wan stippling of light.

"How much has Zarko told you?"

"He's an old friend of mine and often comes up here for a chat. He was here yesterday."

"What did you say to him when he asked you to watch me?"

"He never got to that point." The memory of Zarko standing on this same terrace with her made her smile. She liked both these men, but above all she liked the position she held between them, and she had the good sense not to invalidate that position by demanding too much. She went on slowly, "I know . . . I'm being tiresome. But you see, I'm very fond of Franja. She isn't the kind to stand up to this life . . . there's too much against her. Maybe I'm worried because I know that she can't compromise as I do. You know what that means in this country."

They were at the end of the terrace, a festoon of fireflies rose and fell about the tall spear of a yucca plant and from the darkness of the garden there was a shrill murmur of cicadas. He took her hand and raised it, feeling a great tenderness for her as he kissed it.

"I'm sorry I've disappointed you."

"Have you?" Then before he could answer, she went on, her tone light, her manner changing. "Come and see me again soon. I'm going back to Belgrade in a couple of days. My son thinks I'm getting into mischief here."

Sleep, he knew, wasn't going to come easily that night. He lay on his bed in his dressing gown, smoking, and the light wind through the open balcony window billowed out the long curtains as though some animal, sleek and curved, were fawn-

ing against them from the outside. Very quietly, he said to himself, "Damn Franja, and damn Raikes and damn the whole business." But his anger, he knew too, was not directed against them, but against himself. He was tied up and nothing at the moment seemed to promise that the knot would be unravelled. He tried to dismiss the whole affair from his mind and to think about something else . . . details of an ore-crushing plant, a long argument he had had with Raikes over the special government subsidy for steel which at the last moment had meant revising all their costing . . . details of the maintenance section which would have to come out for a year at least. But his attention refused to hold anything outside his problems . . . He rolled over and stubbed out his cigarette. The only help tonight would be five aspirins and a glass of brandy . . .

He lit himself another cigarette, castigating his weakness in smoking so much and excusing it with the thought that at least cigarettes were cheap enough in this country. As he dropped the dead match into the ashtray on the small table, he heard the door of his room click gently and then open. The waiter Joseph came in, carrying a small tray. He closed the door and came across to the bed, smiling. On the tray was a large glass of brandy and a soda siphon.

"I've just brought Colonel Grol a brandy, monsieur. I thought you might like one, too."

Hudson sat up as Joseph set the tray on the table.

"Joseph," he said, "you've saved my life."

"Have I, monsieur?" The broad, blue-jowled face was turned to him for a moment, and the grey eyes were dark with a deep smile. "I rather hope that you are going to save mine, too." The words were quiet, unhurried and as he finished speaking he rested his hands on the table, still leaning forward. Hudson's look travelled slowly from his face to his hands and he saw that on the index finger of the right hand he was wearing a ring, a signet ring of gold marked with

an intaglio on the large facet showing a crowned stork holding a writhing snake in its long beak. Before Hudson could say anything, he went on evenly, "I can spare you not more than ten minutes. The reception clerk is in the linen closet with one of the chambermaids. He's an impatient man, and a conscientious one—he won't be away from his post for long. I should prefer to be downstairs before he returns."

Hudson sat forward, his eyes on Joseph, and momentarily he saw the curl of a smile touch the other's lips. "How long have you known that Raikes or I was the man you wanted?"

"What a man guesses is not ground enough for action—in my life. One has to be certain. Today at lunch you convinced me. Hurry, monsieur."

The last phrase was said gently, but there was a hint of command in it. Hudson paused, marshaling his facts, remembering Sandro's letter, and then began.

"There's a fisherman, Sandro Venetti, in this town who is an agent. He is returning to Italy by boat. You will go with him."

"How?"

Nothing was wasted between them now, personality was dropped, and their words became bare strokes that outlined boldly the simple plan of the future.

"Fifteen miles up the coast there's an island—Metilini. It's twenty miles long and at the far end of it there is a military post, and at this end there is the town of Metilini. Sandro and his son own a motor schooner—the *Rab*—and they have a government contract to carry supplies once a month to the military post at the far end of the island. Tomorrow morning they leave for the island with supplies and by midnight they will be at the post. They spend two days there, leaving in the afternoon of the third day. At nine o'clock that night they will call in at Metilini. You must be in Metilini the evening of the fourth day from now."

"To join them?"

"Yes. From Metilini instead of returning here Sandro will go to Italy—it's a ten-hour run to Termoli and for most of it he'll have the cover of night."

"Won't there be guards aboard the boat?"

"Yes, three. But there's a festival of some sort in Metilini that evening. Drinking, dancing. Sandro has arranged to let the guards go ashore—unofficially—for a couple of hours. While they are ashore you will go out to him. You can swim or steal a boat."

Joseph nodded. "There's a steamboat service to Metilini. I can arrange to have my day off and leave for the island early in the morning on the boat. Are you leaving in the same way—with Sandro?"

Hudson was surprised at a question which he had never even put to himself. "No. I have done all I need to do by giving you this information. I shall leave the country in the normal way when my work is finished."

Joseph picked up the tray with the siphon, pausing before he turned towards the door. "I'm grateful to you, monsieur. Maybe, in Italy or elsewhere I shall have more chance to demonstrate my gratitude . . ."

"And perhaps tell me something about yourself?"

Joseph smiled. "Perhaps . . . but it isn't often that the relief of talking is available for men who work as I do. There are a lot of men out there in the darkness . . ." One hand gestured vaguely towards the door, towards the East, ". . . whose lives hang on words which must not be spoken . . ." For a moment his face was lined, the flesh drawn up tightly as though against some inner sourness of thought, and Hudson was reminded of Sandro and the tiredness and strain that had marked his voice. He knew that in the darkness of the sedan chair Sandro's face had been as this man's face was now. No matter what courage a man brought to this side of life it was not enough to ward off the inevitable disgust and contamination which spread from the evil necessity of deal-

ing in the suspicions, hatreds and fears that marked each side. To survive men had to surrender what little nobility they knew and had to drop back into the elemental existence of the jungle, hunt and be hunted, kill or be killed . . . Men and women had still not found any better expression of corporate life than animated the first wolf packs that contested the hunting rights of the first game-filled forests. Man went on two legs only because it gave him greater hunting powers, not because he could lift his head to the sky and find there an answer to the spirit which made him restless with dissatisfaction . . .

"Perhaps . . ."

Joseph was gone and Hudson dropped back against the pillows, his hand going out for his glass of brandy.

Milo Lepovitch was defending himself. Yet even in defense he knew the value of circumspection. Belgrade was getting impatient, and he knew that it was better to concede a justification for that impatience rather than try to prove that it was unmerited.

Things have gone slowly chiefly because we are handicapped in dealing with Hudson through the very nature of his overt mission here. The importance of that has been before us always and has prevented the use of measures which might otherwise have been taken. He can only have a few days more here and, for us, they are of crucial importance. If he leaves without anything happening, I suggest that I travel to Belgrade at the same time, leaving Zarko to deal with anything which may arise here after his departure. In Belgrade I suggest that he should be detained against the possibility of later developments here. But all this presumes the necessity for risking his commercial contract. He is, I understand, a director of the English engineering firm and any action against him automatically means the loss of his contract. However, I think the time has come when the suggestion might be considered of arranging for him, here in Dubrovnik, or perhaps on

the way back to Belgrade, some simple accident which could have no international or commercial reaction, and which by removing the key operator would invalidate whatever plan is being formed. . . .

. . . In accordance with your instructions, I am attaching a detailed report on the organization of the police system here. In my opinion the root of the trouble is Comrade Zarko. He has induced a quite undemocratic spirit of friendliness and complacency into the entire establishment with the result that among its members there is none of that constant watchfulness for those signs of bourgeois inefficiency which must be maintained in the interests of the People's Republics. What is needed here is a younger man, Belgrade-trained, without any local affiliations and one prepared to be ruthless in the great cause. . . .

Someone, he thought, leaning back and lighting a cigarette, like myself. The time had come, he judged, when he could risk a more definite accusation against Zarko. No matter what possible influence Zarko might have in Belgrade, he felt confident of his growing case against him. Dubrovnik was a pleasant place. In one of the better villas out towards Mount Sergio he and his wife could live very happily when she was well enough to leave the Sanatarium.

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DAY TEN

One of the children had fever, and had been isolated in a small bare room at the top of the orphanage which had once been the summer palace of the Emperor Maximilian. It lay on the narrow iron bed, its eyes small and puffed in the flushed face, and took the milk which Yelitsa spooned into its mouth. She was tender with the child, the thin shoulders under her supporting arm rousing in her a compassion which was common with her when she was with children. The child leaned back against her arm, and she was happy to give it her strength and care. She wiped its face with a damp cloth and settled it in the bed.

Going to the window, to open it a little to bring air to the room, she knew that she wanted a child. Once she had hoped that her child when it came would belong to Luca. But Luca was dead, and gradually the pain of that loss was dying. But she still wanted a child and now it would be Tulio's. She had been home for a few hours the previous day, to see Sandro and Tulio before they went off on their monthly trip to Metilini. She had been ready to give Tulio his rights with her, the thought of the child in her mind. But the two hours had given them no opportunity. Sandro had stayed in the apartment and Tulio, checking over the list of stores for the schooner, had wanted no more than her cooking. When he had walked down to the boat with her, his big hand gripped her arm tightly, the fingers pinching into her flesh, and she had guessed that if she could have stayed longer he would

have satisfied his other hunger. But he had said nothing beyond "Try and bring some oil next time."

From the window, high above the island and its covering of oaks, she could see the fortress-dominated mouth of the harbor and as she watched she saw the shabby white hull of the *Rab* move round the end of the mole, crawling out to sea with a thick smear of wake trailing behind it. The masts were bare of sails, and the figures on deck small. Three days, and they would be back. With luck she could bribe one of the other girls to change her day, so that she could be at home when they returned . . . The child behind her suddenly said something and she turned and went to it. It had been sick, throwing up the milk all over its breast and the bedclothes. Patiently, unmoved by the sour smell of the vomit, she began to clean it up, talking soothingly to the child as she worked, anxious to take the fear from its frightened eyes.

At the same moment, Zarko was leaning back in his office chair, wondering whether the confusion so evident in Franja's eyes as she faced him from the chair across his desk, arose from fear or simple incomprehension of the reason for her summons to his room so early in the morning. It was only just eight o'clock. She sat there with a silk scarf over her hair, wearing a simple cotton frock, her legs bare, her feet in sandals, just as she had been dressed when his man had picked her up as she returned with her grandmother from the early market in the main square.

"You didn't come to see me yesterday." His voice was not unkind, for he had nothing against her.

"You told me not to come unless I felt I had something to tell you." Her voice was flat, deliberately controlled against her confusion.

"You saw Mr. Hudson yesterday?"

"Yes—at lunch."

"And nothing happened which you thought interesting enough to tell me?"

"No."

Zarko smiled. As far as she was concerned he felt it was probably the truth. He clicked his tongue reflectively against the inside of his lower lip, a vulgar little sound which stood out sharply against the faint murmur of the town outside.

"I see." He stood up, habit taking him as he came to the point of the interview, and walked to the window. "Did you realize that every day since you've worked for us, your room has been searched?"

"No. But I am not surprised." It was a flash of spirit which made him turn and look at her quizzically.

"Don't be harsh on us. It's a sensible precaution which a good policeman mustn't neglect. Yes, your room is searched, and this morning while you were shopping we found something which we think is important. Tell me—" He came back to his desk and opened a drawer. "Why did you bring this menu card away from the Hotel Argentina yesterday?"

The menu card with its little drawing of the Tudor house was dropped before her. For a second she moved to take it, then she stopped herself. She knew why it was important to her, but she had no idea why it might be important to Zarko. But whatever it was that interested him, she knew that it reached out towards Hudson.

"It's a drawing he did of the house he lived in as a boy. I like him, and as he is going soon, I thought I would keep it as a memento."

Zarko missed nothing of the understated affection, but for the moment he was unconcerned with it.

"Did he give it to you?"

"No. I took it without his knowledge."

Zarko turned away. There was a fresh pot of flowers on his mantelshelf now, a little clump of star-shaped trailing blue flowers whose name he would never remember and about

which his daughter teased him. He fretted the earth around the roots with a stubby forefinger.

"He's a very pleasant young man. I like him myself." He came back, watching her, wondering how all this sounded to Lepovitch who was listening in the other room. Lepovitch would have bullied her, and if she had closed up would have gone on to deliberate torture. Gentleness paid better, and left one's conscience easier. He turned the card over and exposed the other drawing. "Now tell me about that."

Franja laughed, surprised, and then her laughter died as she saw that for him there was no humor in the drawing. His face was still, drawn into tired planes of flesh that made him suddenly ugly.

"He drew it for Madeo—the small Ransko boy."

"Go on—tell me everything. How he drew it, when, and what happened to it, and how many people saw it?"

Franja told him, the scene clear in her mind. Now and again he asked a question, but always the purpose in his questions was lost on her, except that she was certain that to him it was important, and in that importance a danger for Hudson.

When she had finished he was silent for a while, thinking. Franja waited and then, as he picked up the card, folding it and putting it in his pocket, he said quietly—

"You have no idea what all this is about?"

"No."

He nodded. "I believe you."

Encouraged by his frankness, realizing that he had treated her more kindly than any other police official would have done, she asked—

"Does this mean that you don't want me to see him any more?"

"No. You've been very useful. But for the time being you must stay here. Don't be alarmed—it will only be for a couple of hours and then you can go."

He went to the door and called for the sentry.

He gave his orders carefully to the man.

"This young lady will stay here until I return. You will stay with her. Find her a magazine to look at—there are some on top of the files over there—and see that she doesn't use the telephone or move from the room. And I forbid you to talk to her."

He went out without another word or look at Franja, and she was left, fear racing through her, knowing that whatever Zarko was about to do was directed at Hudson, and the strength of her fear drew out the strength of her love. If Zarko had let her go she would have tried to warn Hudson, even though she understood nothing. She sat in her chair, staring unseeingly at the magazine in her lap.

In the hallway Lepovitch joined Zarko. He blinked from behind his glasses and a dry smile twisted his thin lips.

"So you really believe her?"

"It doesn't matter whether I do or not. She's unimportant beside this—" He tapped the menu card he held in his hand. "If Hudson didn't do this drawing idly—and I don't think he did—then the moment has come when we may be able to force something from him—or from the other people at the hotel."

"Force?"

"Yes. But not in the way you mean. Raikes had a ring with a similar design on it. It might be some kind of sign. If we go up to the hotel now, come down on them hard, someone may slip up. It's happened before. We'll search the place, too—openly. That always makes people nervous."

"And what shall we look for?" There was a suggestion of contempt in the words.

"I don't know. We're in the dark. But it's no good waiting for something to come to us. We've got to try and make it happen."

Lepovitch nodded. He hadn't the faith in the drawing

which Zarko had, but he knew the psychological value of shock tactics. Throwing the net at random and closing it suddenly often brought results. They had nothing to lose. He said abruptly—

"I'm coming with you. I've kept in the background long enough."

Zarko paused. He could read this man like a book. He didn't like him and he never would, but only to his face did he allow himself to show his feeling. In his reports to Belgrade he had always been scrupulously fair . . . fairer than Lepovitch would have been with him in his reports. But that was unimportant. The people in Belgrade were not fools—though he knew only too well that a constant suggestion of unreliability, even without proof behind it, could go far to destroy confidence in any man. Lepovitch thought only of his career and would discredit him if he could—by suggestion or proof. Maybe he already had his eye on the Dubrovnik post . . .

Zarko said gently—

"Why not? It's important for you to be in at the death . . . and this might be the moment."

Five minutes later two police cars were on their way to the Hotel Argentina.

It was nine o'clock when the reception clerk came out on to the hotel terrace, accompanied by Zarko, Lepovitch and five armed Militia guards. All the guests were at breakfast, including two young women and an elderly married couple who had arrived late the previous night from Kotor on the steamer.

Joseph had just brought Hudson his coffee, and as the party came out on the terrace they both turned and saw them. Joseph swung back almost immediately and began to pour Hudson's coffee, his hand quite steady.

Zarko walked halfway down the terrace, followed by the

curious glances of the guests. Then, pausing at an empty table, he rapped on the top for attention, and addressed the company.

Hudson leaned back, lit a cigarette, and saw that the guards had disposed themselves in a line at the back of the terrace. They stared straight before them with stiff, uncommunicative faces, about them the suggestion that the whole proceedings bored them since the interesting undercurrents were never revealed to them.

Zarko was brief, and Hudson had a glimpse of the authority and ruthlessness which made this man a considerable force as an opponent. But most of his attention was directed to the other man, younger, tall and thin, ascetic almost, who wore glasses and stood behind Zarko. He had a feeling that he had seen him before somewhere—maybe in the Gradska Kavana—and the man's presence roused in him an uneasiness which added to the apprehension stirred in him by this early morning visit.

"My duty as chief of police in this town has made it necessary for me to search every person in this hotel, and also to search the hotel itself. You will go on with your breakfast, but you will not leave your tables until you are called for. I realize that there are one or two foreign nationals here who may object to being searched. I hope—considering the gravity of this affair—that they will have the courtesy to save me the unpleasant necessity of using force." He looked around, his glance taking in Hudson and Dr. Brussiak. Neither of them made any move. "Thank you. The waiters out here now will leave at once and join the rest of the staff in the lounge. They will be dealt with first." With a short nod of dismissal, he turned and went back into the hotel, followed by the four waiters who had been serving on the terrace. The guards remained.

Hudson looked around. The guests sat stiffened into silence. If this, he thought, had happened in an English or

French hotel there would have been a pandemonium of indignant bickering over the right of the police to search them. But here, each group sat still, held down by fear, unstirring against a process which their life had made familiar to them. Colonel Grol was the first to recover. He laughed suddenly, and in a loud voice cried—

"Well, a pleasant start to a sunny morning! And what does he mean we can go on with our breakfast? The damned waiter hasn't brought me any coffee yet." The outburst provoked a smile only in Hudson.

He sat for half an hour while Zarko went through the waiters and staff. And from the rooms above the terrace he heard the shutting and opening of doors, the tramp of feet on the balconies and along the corridors as a party of searchers went through the rooms. Searching a room, how well he knew it from his prison days, was an art. A skilled man would miss nothing. No one of any intelligence hid anything in a room which might be subject to a thorough search . . . Zarko wanted something in the hotel and the only thing which was of any significance was the ring. If the ring were found on Joseph or in his room, Zarko would make Joseph talk unless—he knew the thought was not idle—Joseph were quick enough to put himself beyond talk.

A Militia guard came to the door of the lounge and called for the Ransko family. At first Papa Ransko made to go by himself, but the guard signalled for the entire family. Madeo went by, grinning at Hudson, delighted by the new game which had enlivened a dull breakfast. When they had entered the guard moved across to their table and searched it, prodding into the sticky remains of the conserve, tipping out the remains of coffee and milk on the terrace and whipping off the cloth. Table, chairs and the adjacent trellis work of the terrace were all thoroughly examined in a silence which grew until it had almost a physical weight.

One by one the groups were called, and each time the

process was repeated. They disappeared and their tables and near vicinity were searched. Colonel Grol, Brussiak, the Sumitch couple and then Hudson were summoned by the guard. He got up, was marched through the lounge, which was empty except for a guard who stood at the doorway opening into the inner dining room where he saw that the staff and the guests who had already been searched were now quarantined. He heard Madeo's voice, petulant because the game had gone on too long, and for a moment he saw Joseph standing against the far wall, his face impassive. Whatever Joseph had done with the ring, one thing at least seemed clear, he had not hidden it on himself. Hudson thought of the men searching the rooms upstairs. The staff had the top attic floor. They would be the last rooms to be searched.

He was shown into an office room across the passage from the lounge. Zarko sat at a small desk. A guard stood inside the door, another stood behind Zarko. Zarko smiled and beckoned him to come forward. The guards contemplated the vacancy which seemed to have invaded their souls and stood so stiffly that the creases of their faded blue blouses were opened up to show the dark, original color of the material.

"You have no objection to being searched, Mr. Hudson?"

"I have—but there would be little point in objecting unless I wanted the pleasure of a tussle with your guards. And it's too soon after breakfast for that kind of exercise."

Zarko smiled. Someday—out of the perverseness of spirit which accompanies admiration for a man's qualities—he wanted to see this Englishman taken off his balance, to drive him into a disadvantage which would reveal the human weaknesses which he shared with every man. But this was not that moment. Later, perhaps . . . He knew, too, that there was probably no point in searching a man who was willing to be searched.

"Sit down, Mr. Hudson."

As Hudson sat down, Zarko reached for a brief case at the

side of the desk and drew out a large white envelope, bulky, impressed with seals. He handed it across to Hudson.

"This came by special courier late last night. It's for you—from the Ministry of National Economy. I was told to hand it to you personally."

"Thank you. I've been waiting for it."

"And now that you have it—how much longer will you be with us?"

"I shall go through the contract details and specifications today—if you leave me any time. Tomorrow I can mail the whole lot off to England with my comments. The day after that I shall leave."

"You won't take it with you?"

"No—the work is urgent and it'll travel quicker by mail than I shall." Hudson dropped the envelope on the desk, puzzled for a second. "Was it for this, that you called me in here?"

Zarko shook his head. "No. For quite a different reason." He tipped back in his chair, rubbing the tips of his fingers together softly. "I was going to have you searched, Mr. Hudson. But I've changed my mind."

"Is that wise? The other guests might construe it as favoritism."

"It's a favor, Mr. Hudson, which I accord you, not out of my liking for you, but out of an intelligent consideration of facts. No, instead of searching you, I want to ask you a question . . ." As he spoke he dropped forward in his chair and pulled from his pocket the menu card. He flattened it and placed it almost reverently before Hudson, the drawing of the stork face upwards. Hudson stared at the card woodenly. How had Zarko got hold of it? What a fool he had been not to make sure it was destroyed. He was aware of Zarko's eyes on him and knew he had revealed nothing.

"Tell me, Mr. Hudson—why did you do that particular drawing for Madeo?"

"Why?" Hudson laughed. But as he laughed he was being amazed by a familiar phenomenon, the utter lack of correlation between time and thought. A man could strike back, unaware in his own body of the blow which was still coming, but prepared by the instinctive merging of thought into action which made of time a sagging, laggardly medium. Now he knew why Zarko had come, and knew, too, how much must still remain conjecture in Zarko's brain.

Zarko was watching him, dour-faced, unsmiling.

"Yes, why, Mr. Hudson?"

"Do you know Madeo?"

"I've seen him."

"He's a precocious child, and he likes me. I've often drawn for him."

"But why this drawing?"

"I haven't the faintest idea."

"But one doesn't do a drawing without a reason."

"No—but the reason, may be hard to find. Unless one is a psychologist."

"You'd do me a favor, Mr. Hudson, if you would try to give me your reason for doing this one."

"Reasons are elusive. You must let me think."

"Take your time, Mr. Hudson. But you won't try to find substitutes for the truth, will you?"

"Why should I? But you must be patient with me. A psychologist would." Hudson paused, thinking, then went on slowly, "You see I'd just finished the drawing on the other side of the card for Mademoiselle Pazan. Then Madeo came up and asked for a drawing, a big drawing. He likes fantastic things. What should I draw? Yes . . . of course, I'm beginning to remember. A moment before I'd finished a sketch showing a small boy holding a rod as he stood at the side of a pool. Look at it—it might almost be a hunched up heron or stork fishing the pool. Maybe that impression was still clear in my mind. I thought of a stork. But it had to be

fantastic . . ." Hudson was talking slowly, deliberately lecturing, and listening to himself because he realized now that it was along such lines that his idea had come to him. "And a fantastic stork recalled to my mind a signet ring which Raikes used to wear while we were in Belgrade. It provided the touch of fantasy which Madeo wanted. The design on the paper is the same as the intaglio design on Raikes' ring. That's near enough what happened, I should say."

Zarko rounded his lips and whistled gently, and the hint of a smiling doubt creased his eyes. The man was a devil. He had gone near enough to the truth, to obscure real truth. He had met him more frankly than he had imagined and by that frankness put him out of court and back into the same perplexity which he had hoped would that morning be resolved.

"It's very neat, isn't it? Almost too neat?"

Hudson shrugged his shoulders. "I've always understood from psychologists that the reasons for everything we do are quite comprehensible and always, when you dig down to them, of an astonishing neatness. I presume that your interest in all this is connected with Raikes and the idea you have that I am carrying on whatever work he was doing?"

And that, unaccountably, made Zarko angry. As a gibe it was small and should have been passed, but it touched some unexpected soreness in him.

"You can presume what you like, Mr. Hudson. But one thing you can be sure of—I haven't come out to this hotel so early for the sake of the coffee they serve." And being angry, he abandoned his good sense for a while and indulged himself in bad temper. "I think we'd better search you after all."

He stood by while Hudson was searched. He was made to strip and his clothes were turned inside out. No hiding place was neglected on him or on his clothes. And when he was escorted to the dining room, he, too, was angry, but holding

it. In the dining room he kept away from Joseph, but slowly the anger died, forced aside by the apprehension which was large in him.

An hour later Zarko came to the door of the room. He apologized to the company for the interruption of their morning, told them they were all at liberty to go, and went away himself with Lepovitch and the guards without another word of explanation.

Hudson went straight up to his room, which bore all the signs of a thorough search which no one had been at any pains to conceal. He rang down for a glass of vermouth, but the waiter who brought it was not Joseph, and he was left sipping it on his small balcony in the sun, wondering what had happened and full of uneasiness. In the end, he got the large envelope and took out his work and forced himself to concentrate on it. When he went down to lunch it was with some relief that he saw Joseph was serving. Nothing passed between them until Joseph brought his coffee and then, as he bent over the cup, the waiter said quietly,

"Ring down for a drink in the afternoon and I will bring it to you."

It was an hour after lunch before Hudson rang down for his drink. A little later Joseph came in, smiling, and carrying a large glass of lemon squash.

Hudson took it, and to conceal his impatience drained it slowly before he spoke. But as he put it back on the tray he had the impression that Joseph had seen through the moment of pride.

"It was a near thing—wasn't it?"

Joseph nodded. "Very—what happened between you and Zarko?"

Hudson told him, and finished, "But what about the ring?"

"When a token like that has served its purpose, monsieur—one gets rid of it quickly. In this life that is a most important

principle. You were very careless about the menu card. I'd thought you'd destroyed it." There was a note of censure in his voice.

"And I thought you'd picked it up. Franja must have taken it. But I admit the carelessness in not making sure. However, we're safe so long as they didn't find the ring."

"But they did find it."

"You said you got rid of it!"

"So I did. But I didn't throw it away. I put it where if it were found, it would give a wrong impression . . ."

"Where did you put it?"

"In Colonel Grol's room. There's a box of cigarettes on his dressing table. I put it underneath. He's not a great smoker. It would be safe there for five or six days—unless someone came looking for it."

"Colonel Grol?" Hudson went to the window. He could see the value of laying a trail away from Joseph—but that it had been Colonel Grol he chose gave him an unpleasant feeling. "That's going to be hard on him, isn't it?"

"One can't afford to consider that." Joseph's voice was cold. "Anyway—although they may not believe him at first, they will when I am gone and you are away. For the moment it is important that they should be on a false line."

"I suppose so—but I like him and I could have wished you'd chosen someone else."

Joseph shrugged his shoulders.

"Did they find the ring?"

"I don't know. I think they must have. Anyone searching a room thoroughly would have looked among the cigarettes in the box. Yes, they must have found it, but they left it there. I had a look before lunch. It was there still, so I took it away and it is now in the sea."

"Why did you do that?"

Joseph smiled and rubbed his fingers against his nose.

"We must act for Colonel Grol, as they will suppose him

to act. He hid the ring in the cigarettes, a safe enough place so long as he was not suspected. The police make a thorough search. He goes back to his room and finds the ring safely there. He thanks his stars and immediately removes it. That is how they will expect him to act. Sometime today someone will check up in the cigarettes and expect to find the ring gone. They won't be mistaken."

"Yes, I see that. But I still don't understand why they haven't taken some action against him."

"Why should they? They've found their man. He doesn't know they've found him. They can now sit back and watch him and you, waiting for the final move. The chief of police wanted also to get his hands on the people who are arranging Grol's escape. He only has to wait . . . and while he's waiting, I shall be gone and you will be on your way to Belgrade with nothing definite against you. Because of your commercial interests they'll be very cautious about taking action unless they have stronger proof."

Hudson nodded, but his discomfort at the trick played on Grol—although he saw the necessity for it—had spread, and in opposition to the narrow self-interest of Joseph—which again he could understand—he was aware now of a concern for other people besides himself. When he and Joseph were gone, and Colonel Grol (he could imagine what would happen when Tito's friend started to play up) had vindicated himself, the police would look around for a scapegoat. Someone would have to bear their ill-humor. He saw that it would be Franja. Whatever her innocence, she would suffer. They would say that she had known the importance of the drawing, that she had served deliberately to provoke the search which had put them falsely on to Grol . . . He bit the inside of his lip as he tried to shut away the images that rose in his mind. She would have no strength against their insistence. In the end one confessed to the false charge simply to bring

an end to the intolerable process of protestation. He turned sharply and as he spoke his voice was thick, harsh—

"Colonel Grol can look after himself. But the girl can't. She'll be in trouble when we're gone."

Joseph faced him calmly. "So?"

"Don't you care what happens to her?" There was a belligerent tone in his voice, an anger rising against Joseph and against the indecent tangle of deceit and self-concern which marked the whole affair.

"There is nothing we can do for her. She must look after herself."

"That's just what she can't do! Don't other people mean anything to you?" He was more than angry now.

"This isn't a sentimental charade. I can't afford to think of her. I have to think of myself and the others with me. You don't survive long in my kind of life if you start being quixotic . . ."

Hudson made an impatient gesture, cutting him off—

"If I hadn't been quixotic you wouldn't be escaping. You've got to do as I say!"

Joseph's face stiffened with anger. Blandness, good-humor had gone. He was ugly, pugnacious, ready to quarrel. Then suddenly the resentment passed. He shrugged his shoulders and his face was lined, loose with an apathy which reached back into a past full of strain and anxiety.

"It would be silly for us to quarrel. What do you want?"

"She must go with you." Hudson watched him closely, wondering how far he was to be trusted.

"Very well." Joseph's voice was calm. He went on. "But I want to have no contact with her until we are at Metilini." He began to move towards the door. "I must go. I shall leave it to you. If she appears at Metilini I will look after her from there."

"I'll speak to her."

When Joseph had gone, he walked restlessly up and down

his room. He was seeing Franja on the beach later that afternoon. It wasn't going to be easy to speak to her.

Franja was released from Zarko's room at eleven o'clock. Zarko told her nothing, except that she was free to go, that he would still like her to continue her friendship with Hudson, and that as long as she continued to be frank with him she had nothing to fear.

"You're doing us a service which it is the duty of any citizen to perform. You've been very helpful. If everything turns out well—which I think it will—then this will not be forgotten."

But his kindness made no impression on her. During her long wait, the anxiety in her for Hudson had become a panic which made her want to rush and find him the moment she was released. Only by an effort of will did she hold herself back, and return home to make evasive excuses to her grandmother which she knew were not believed. She was not concerned with anything Hudson had done, or had been supposed to do. The question of his innocence or guilt was never once raised in her. She was only concerned with the rôle she played which might have brought him into trouble.

When she met him on the beach that afternoon, he was pleasant, apparently untouched by any anxiety. They lay on the beach in the sun, and somewhere on the terrace of the café behind them they both knew that there was a man who watched them.

"It's my old friend with the patched shoe," Hudson said, watching her as she turned and looked at the terrace. "I'm getting quite fond of him."

Franja turned back to stare out across the water. Hudson lay at her side. Slowly she rubbed the flat of her palm against the line of her bare leg, feeling the small particles of sand against her flesh. Around them the beach was noisy with the half-day crowd. Looking out to sea, holding her face from

him, her fair hair loose over the nape of her neck, she said quietly—

"Has Zarko any real reason to be so interested in you?"

Hudson was silent. The question was between them now, a point of honor which had to be met, demanding from him a truth which he could only give if he was sure of her. And now that the question had come, he had to measure that against so many things . . . the importance of the work Joseph was doing, whatever it was, the untidy, good-humored courage of Raikes which had brought him death, the safety of Sandro and Tulio now somewhere on their way to Metilini . . . an incautious word might bring so much disaster.

"Did you have a very bad time this morning?"

Franja accepted the evasion. She was disappointed but not surprised.

"How did you know?"

"I guessed. Zarko and his guards came to the hotel and searched everything and everybody. It was to do with the menu card you took away, wasn't it?"

She nodded.

He went on, watching a sand hopper struggle across the tiny barrier of pebbles he made with his hands, "I didn't know you put such a value on my drawings . . ."

He was hurting her and he didn't know it. The pain meant nothing, but it was the ignorance behind it which gave her voice the tones of a stranger as she answered—

"It was the house. It reminded me of England. I thought I'd like to have it as a . . ." She broke off and, although she was not looking at him, she knew he was watching her.

He sat forward suddenly and he put his hand on the warm crook of her arm.

"You've friends in England, haven't you?"

She nodded. She heard him breathing, heard the wash of the surf like the rasp of an enormous cat's tongue across the

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verge of the beach, and then his voice urgent, forced from him almost as though a sudden recklessness lay behind it—

"You asked me a question just now, which I haven't answered. I'm going to ask you a question which I want you to answer. If you do, I'll give you the answer to your question."

"What is it?"

"If you had the chance to escape from this country would you take it? No, don't answer yet. A chance which isn't a hundred per cent certain, but is certain enough. Would you take it?"

She was silent for a while. The idea was new to her, frightening at first for she knew the limits of her own courage, but in the hope it held there was a strength which could sustain most weakness. She turned and looked at him, at the brown, clean-cut face, the tidy, muscular figure and the flicker of his eyelids as he blinked against the sunlight.

"Yes. I would."

Hudson smiled and lay back against the sand, relaxing against the passing of tension within him. He had taken the step now and the consequences were no longer his own. He had committed himself, her and many others, and he was glad because for a moment he had shaken off the weight of narrow self-interests and the inhuman single-mindedness which he had until now shared with Joseph.

"Then you shall. Zarko has good reason to be suspicious of me. I'm in your hands now, and I trust you."

She made no answer to that, for she knew the strength of her own loyalty to him. But she could not hold back the other question which his offer raised, the romantic hope which had been the cause of her anxiety that morning. Quite without embarrassment she could admit to herself that she loved him, and with a naked desire for that love to be complete she longed for him to show that it was not entirely one-sided. Her question now sought to draw some sign of his feeling for her.

"Why should you give me this chance? Why me?"

The answer came swiftly, holding no hope for her, driving her back into herself.

"Because you want to go, because I can help you, and because you've no future in this country . . ."

"You'd have done the same for anyone else in my position?"

"Why not . . . ? He rolled over on his elbow and his face was hidden from her, and he knew that she was disappointed. A long time ago he had realized that she lived on her emotions. A straightforward arrangement would never satisfy her for she was probably in love with him and she wanted that to be the reason. He added gently, "But I'm glad it is you and not someone else . . ." But even as he said it he knew that it was not enough for her, and strangely he was aware of a dissatisfaction in himself. He stood up, anxious for some action, and as he pulled her to her feet, he said, "Let's swim. I'll see you tomorrow and give you all the details. No point in having them until the last moment."

Lepovitch's report that evening was long and detailed, a labor to which he devoted himself with a cold enthusiasm. The curtains at the open window stirred in the warm air, and there was a sense of awakening storm in the atmosphere. Over the tops of the houses across the road, framed by the black tracery of the tall poplars, he could see the soft, unsteady play of sheet lightning out to sea.

. . . There is little doubt that we are now on the edge of success. Colonel Grol is our man, and the two rings—the one owned by Raikes and the other by him—were tokens of recognition. Guilty or not, it would be inexcusable to let Hudson out of the country until we have Colonel Grol in our hands. The day after tomorrow Hudson is travelling to Belgrade. I shall put a man on the train with him and suggest that he is detained at Belgrade on passport

trouble until such time as you decide what to do with him. Colonel Grol is leaving Dubrovnik late in the afternoon on the day after Hudson leaves. He has booked a ticket for the steamer to Makarska. It would be premature to arrest him right away knowing that he will lead us to the other part of this escape organization. With a little patience we shall have them all in our hands. The ring, which I insisted should be left in the cigarette box, has now gone. Indubitably, he thinks it was not found and has now disposed of it or removed it to a safer place . . .

. . . The reason for the telegram which I sent earlier today will be even more apparent when you get this. Colonel Grol is not an unimportant person—there may be political repercussions after his arrest, and I do feel that the time has come when the policy here of allowing full responsibility in all decisions to Comrade Zarko, should be reversed. Until now my advisory capacity has been justified. But the time has come when the whole affair should be placed in the hands of someone who will be able to follow it through the inevitable later stages in Belgrade without being tied by routine attachments to a local post such as Comrade Zarko occupies. I am not arguing for myself—I would welcome someone from Belgrade to take over—but if there is to be a change of policy it must come now . . .

He sat back, sucking at the end of his fountain pen. They would hand the responsibility over to him, he knew. A new man couldn't be sent down from Belgrade at this stage. They would give him full powers because they knew if they left it with Zarko then they would have no scapegoat if things went wrong . . . to blame Zarko wouldn't help them, since he had repeatedly warned them against Zarko. The responsibility would be theirs. But if they put it in his hands, they would cover themselves . . . and he, well, he was confident enough. He had only to watch Grol and Hudson and let them lead him . . . and when it was all over, he would see that he got Zarko displaced and had the position for himself. He had come to like Dubrovnik. He and his wife could be very happy

here . . . unless, of course, something better was offered him. But at the least, he would have Dubrovnik . . . One of the villas would do him . . . Maybe Madame Androsh's villa . . . it was a fine place and it wouldn't be difficult to discredit her, not after her friendship with Hudson. Yes . . . things were going very well.

DAY ELEVEN

By eleven o'clock Hudson had finished his work on the contract papers. There had been no substantial alterations to the specifications already agreed upon at Belgrade, but there was an additional clause now in the finance section stipulating that a certain percentage of equipment should be carried from London in Yugoslav bottoms, and another clause—which Raikes had told him would not be put forward until the last moment—regularizing the amortization of the initial Government credit over a slightly longer period than originally agreed. These were details for the Treasury and the Board of Trade which, he knew, would raise no difficulties for they had all been anticipated. The anxiety of the Yugoslav Government to have the contract concluded was in itself a guarantee that on their side no unreasonable demands would be made. So far as the technical details were concerned everything was straightforward.

Hudson wrote a long report to his firm, commenting on the contract in detail, absorbing himself for a while in the minutiae of his profession, and when this was done he went down to the town to mail the whole lot off to England.

On his way back, he called in at Zarko's office to collect his passport. Zarko was friendly and insisted that he take a drink with him. The passport was handed over.

"Which train are you catching tomorrow?"

There were only two trains a day for Belgrade from the station at Gruz, the small port over the hill from Dubrovnik.

"The afternoon one. Five o'clock."

"Well, I'm sorry you're going."

"I'm afraid I've given you a lot of unnecessary trouble."

Zarko smiled. "As a policeman I am used to that. Will you be coming back to the country?"

"No. We shall eventually send out a construction and maintenance staff, but I shall have nothing to do with that. My work is finished."

Zarko looked across sharply at him, wondering for the moment if there was a double meaning in the words. He was met by Hudson's slow smile.

Hudson knew what lay behind that quick glance. Under Zarko's friendliness there was now a suggestion of anxiety, and he had the odd impression that this morning Zarko was not worrying about him. There was something else, something more personal. As he raised his glass and finished the *rakia,* he was touched by a swift sympathy for the man. When Zarko found out, too late, that Joseph and Franja had left the country and that he had been right about himself, Hudson—what would happen to him? The authorities were not tolerant of failures. Thinking about this, while Zarko insisted on refilling his glass, he was far from pleased with his own conduct in Dubrovnik. He had been forced to lie and act like a thief—no matter what circumstances had forced him into this action, the lies and the outrage against his own conscience remained and touched him with a definite disgust. There was little enough dignity in any man, and it was hard when he found himself having to relinquish that little. Zarko had one set of principles, and he another; Zarko believed sincerely in one form of political life, and he . . . he hadn't the merit of a firm belief, only a hazy acceptance of something he loosely called democracy. He liked Zarko, and Zarko liked him, and here they were forced to cheat and fight one another . . . His eyes wandered to the mantelshelf and he saw the trailing fronds, starred with little blue flowers, from the

new pot. What had happened, he wondered, about the broken pot? Presumably it had never been connected with him, but someone perhaps was blamed for it, and another small point of suspicion had been made which might grow and one day be emphatic enough to tip the balance between justice and injustice for some unknown. No, it didn't matter a damn what arguments one put forward in defense, there was no escape from fact. He had come to this country to do a job of work, and he had abused his position. He had been driven to it as so many men and women, because of their greeds and fears, their ideals and their misshapen passions, were being driven to it all over the world . . . He was going out now to meet Franja, to show her how she could escape from a country which was lovely, ribbed with the grey karst hills, dusty with rich pastel shades of olive and barley. At least, it was easy not to feel heroic about it. He was a conspirator in a world where the only adventure remaining was no more than an imbroglio of meanness and deceit.

Franja was singing as he went through the café. He found himself a table in the loggia and sat looking out over the small harbor. When the orchestra packed up for their lunch, she came and joined him. The waiter brought them their drinks and went, and Hudson leaning his arms on the table began to tell her what she had to do. He spoke casually, unhurried. At the far end of the loggia, by himself at a table and reading *Borba* sat the tall young man who had accompanied Zarko on the previous day.

"You know Metilini?"

"The island?"

"Yes, and the town. There's a festival of some kind there, the day after tomorrow."

"I know. There's a steamboat excursion from here."

"That's it. You must go—can you arrange a day off without comment?"

"I think so."

"Good. On the island Joseph the waiter from the hotel will meet you. He'll probably be on the boat too, but keep away from him until you reach the island. Once there, he will tell you what to do. A boat will be coming in about half-past eight at night to take you off—"

"Openly?"

"More or less. There's no need to worry about that. Just do as Joseph tells you and you'll be all right. You're not followed except when you're with me, are you?"

"No, I'm sure I'm not. They search my room now and again."

They were talking as though they were strangers arranging a deal. But now Hudson paused and his eyes held her. She would have liked to avoid his look. Any feeling he might have had for her, she felt was now thrust out of the way, unable to complicate an arrangement which must remain clear and factual.

"Nervous?"

It was a question which surprised her, leaving her without the calm to reply in words. She felt that he had no right at this stage to concern himself with her personal feelings. They belonged to her and he had no claim to share them. She nodded gently.

"Everything will be all right. Joseph is a very capable man."

The comfort in his words broke down her resolve to stand by herself. She said suddenly—

"What about you? Aren't you coming with us?"

Hudson tipped his chair back. He hesitated a moment before he replied.

"No. There's no need for me to come. I'm leaving tomorrow afternoon on the train."

"Does that mean I shan't see you again?" She was annoyed with herself for saying it, but the words couldn't be denied.

"Joseph knows where to find me in London." The chair dropped forward and he pulled the ashtray towards him. She

was sitting there like an expectant child, waiting to be told something which would please her, and for the moment he wondered why the hell he had complicated everything by bringing her in. He went on grudgingly almost, "When you get to London, of course . . . we must meet again."

He looked up and caught her nod, and saw the corners of her mouth tighten against some inner tremble, and the movement seemed to convict him of cruelty . . . What was the matter with her? Just because you helped someone to escape you didn't swear eternal friendship, you didn't fall in love . . . He closed his cigarette case, preparing to go.

"Don't worry." The phrase was outworn, and he felt its inadequacy.

"I shall be all right." She answered him in the same shabby currency, and they both knew that frankness was denied them. He put out his hand and helped her up, and the warmth of her bare arm against his palm suddenly stirred him, but he knew that too . . . when one was angry with oneself and with a woman, the touch of flesh could provoke a cruel lust. He let go of her as they went down the steps to the stretch of quay. They came through an archway from the harbor into the small street which sloped down to the main square. Here their ways parted but they stood for a moment, each unwilling to take the first move. A crowd of children, long-legged, healthy, shouting, rolled past them from the open doors of a gymnasium and swept across the square. In the silence after their passing, Franja said quietly, knowing it was pride that forced her to it—

"I don't think I shall go to London right away. I have friends in Rome . . . my mother's sister, the Contessa Ricardi . . ." Even that, the unnecessary detail, was bolstering her pride, giving authenticity to a statement in which she only half believed. ". . . I shall go there." She gave him her hand. "You've been very kind . . . you know my gratitude."

Hudson took her hand, and heard himself say—

"There's no need to thank me. And Rome isn't so far from London, not these days." Stupid words, and the meaning behind them unclear even to him.

They said goodbye, and he began to walk back to his hotel obscurely dissatisfied with himself, and concerned for her. There had been an absence of self-reliance in her which had raised his sympathy—though he had felt it unwise to show it. But now he was wondering how she would get on if anything went wrong during the escape. In an emergency Joseph, he suspected, would accept no responsibility for her if his own safety became jeopardized.

Milo Lepovitch left the Gradska Kavana sometime after Hudson. He was not following him, that duty was in the hands of one of the regular men from the police headquarters. He walked slowly to Zarko's office, enjoying the sun and for a while almost relaxed. Nothing much, he knew, could happen now until Hudson and Colonel Grol left. He was thinking about Grol. An eccentric, and close to Tito, and a soldier whose qualities had never been questioned . . . in many ways those were all the factors which one might have looked for in a man who was going to play the traitor. But these days there was no handy rule to help one in police work. The people in the street knew little enough of what went on in their country, and even he knew little more, but that little was enough to force him to move circumspectly. There were enough rumors and suggestions about these days to keep an intelligent man cautious in his opinions and statements. Somewhere, and not far off, there was real trouble coming. If Colonel Grol was the man they wanted, he was only one of many who had infiltrated not only into this country but beyond; the thinly spread network of a movement which might one day have the force which had marked the French resistance. Moreover, there was undoubted trouble coming with Russia. Tito was too strong a personality to accept orders

from others, especially orders which undermined the growing spirit of nationalism with which he had imbued the country. Titoism, the Cominform called it. Yes, to walk safely a man had to look far ahead. These were times when overnight the status of a man might change from traitor to hero, when acclamation for heavy-jowled Stari might turn to a rolling growl of abuse. Responsibility was a weapon which might be turned against the man who held it; but without it, one was only a lackey whose fortunes went up and down with those of the master. He wanted to be a master, not a lackey, and for that he was willing to take the risks of responsibility.

Zarko was at his desk when Lepovitch entered the room. The police chief had been going carefully through all the reports and findings in the file on Hudson. It was a procedure whose value he never disregarded. Working from day to day it was easy for the over-all picture to become distorted, the events of the immediate past drove importance from things which had happened earlier. Without a word Zarko picked up a telegram from his desk and flipped it across to Lepovitch. The gesture was casual. Zarko meant it to be.

Lepovitch read the message and a thin smile drew narrow creases down his long cheeks. He held the smile long after the sensation which had provoked it had gone. He wanted Zarko to see his satisfaction.

"You know what this is?" Lepovitch pushed the form back on to the desk.

Zarko studied a report in the file knowing that his indifference would pique Lepovitch.

"Yes. It came over the open wire. Everyone in this headquarters knows." He looked up now, meeting Lepovitch's eyes frankly. "Did you ask for this authority?"

Lepovitch shrugged his shoulders and lied easily. "No. But it's not an unusual thing, is it? The case has got to the point now where it ceases to be a local concern."

"Has it? I think it's just Belgrade getting rattled." Zarko

could not keep a slight trace of belligerency out of his voice.

"You're not questioning the right of Belgrade to supersede you by me, are you?" The tone was challenging.

"To do that would amount almost to sacrilege, wouldn't it?" No one except Zarko could have said whether there was irony or sincerity behind the words.

Lepovitch stood up. The responsibility from Belgrade was too fresh for him to want to cross swords with Zarko at this moment. When the moment came it would be of his choosing. Something like magnanimity made him conciliatory—

"There's no need to discuss the position. We both obey orders. We can go on as before, only in the event of a difference of opinion, I shall make the decision."

"Naturally."

Zarko lit a cigarette, and then, putting aside his loss of pride—from the first he had expected some development like this—he went on deliberately, "I've been going through this case. There's an aspect of it which I'm not happy about . . . something which I think we could consider more carefully."

"Yes?"

"Yes. Hudson is going to Belgrade. He'll be held there or, if he leaves the train, followed. Grol is going to Makarska—up the coast. He'll be followed, or arrested when the moment is right. But all this leaves a gap. In this town there exist the contacts and maybe the means by which Grol is to escape . . . No, let me go on. Raikes had friends here who looked after him. He had enemies, too. Someone betrayed him. I feel it's here, in Dubrovnik, that the key to the problem rests."

Lepovitch cut him short with an exasperated gesture, the curtness of a new authority. He came to the desk, the lenses of his glasses gleaming in the hard sunlight from the window. For a moment he was dictatorial. If he had been the kind of person who matches emotion with appropriate gesture he would have shaken a chiding finger at Zarko.

"In any case there are always explanations which have to

wait until we have the people concerned in our hands. Hudson and Grol are going away—but there's nothing to prove that they don't intend to come back here . . . surreptitiously. Or, the contacts here may have moved away and are waiting, up or down the coast for one or both of them . . . I've already told you I think the escape is to be by boat. Once anyone gets well out you know the difficulty of catching them . . . We haven't any line on the local people—except that anonymous letter. But we have something better than that. We have Grol and Hudson, and we know they are our men. Isn't that enough?"

Zarko stood up. He was going home to lunch. But he gave himself the pleasure of hoping that he might spoil whatever lunch Lepovitch looked forward to, if he ever did take pleasure in food. He said sharply—

"Enough? For me, no. I like to work into a problem from two sides. But if it's enough for you, that's all that matters. It's your responsibility now. If anything goes wrong no one will blame me. If you're confident—then it would be gratuitous of me to put any doubt in your mind."

He walked across to the door, pausing for a moment by the large photograph. He looked from it to Lepovitch, saw that his words had made their mark, and added the salt that would make the wound itch—"Grol's a personal friend of the Marshal. If he's innocent he won't accept a humble apology. And if he's guilty—well, no man likes losing a friend, even if he's proved a traitor. Stari won't thank you for proving that he doesn't know how to pick his friends . . ." He chuckled. "Responsibility doesn't always give a man sound sleep . . . I should know that."

That evening, before dinner, Hudson walked over to Madame Androsh's villa to have a drink with her. Within himself there was a dissatisfaction which he found unsettling, and he was sure the trouble arose from his last talk with Franja.

She had already gone down to the café when he arrived and momentarily he was disappointed to have missed her. He had the feeling that there was still something waiting to be said between them, a point that needed clarifying.

He sat with Madame Androsh on the terrace, watching the bats hawk the small white-winged moths over the tops of the oleanders.

"How are you travelling from Belgrade?" Madame Androsh asked.

"By air. I shall be in Paris by the evening of the day after tomorrow."

"You flew during the war?"

"Did Franja tell you that?"

"She's told me many things—but not that." She paused, looking out across the water to Lokrum, and Hudson, who knew her so well now, had the impression that she was debating perhaps which of two lines of thought to follow. She went on, "Zarko told me. He was out here this afternoon. He told me some interesting details about you and your prison life. He said that you never escaped from prison yourself because you were doing intelligence work in the camps and organizing the escape of others."

"He seems to be well informed."

She laughed. "Why are men so reticent about the really interesting things in their life? Didn't you ever want to escape yourself?"

"I never seemed to get around to it."

"Maybe it's your particular fate to help others to safety but never share their final difficulties."

Something in what she said touched him, raising two questions in his mind, but leaving him for the moment willing only to follow the more important. He looked across at her sharply.

"Just how much has Franja told you?"

She stood up, smiling. "Enough to make me feel very grate-

ful to you. Enough, too, to make me feel that I don't understand you. You've kept me guessing from the night I first helped you."

He stood up. "But you trust me?"

She nodded. "Yes. But that has nothing to do with understanding a man."

"A woman's intuition?"

She laughed as she took his arm and they walked down the terrace. "No woman trusts that where something really important is concerned. We're cautious creatures." She stopped, facing him and said seriously, echoing in her demand something of the second question which was still in his mind. "Are you sure that you can just go calmly out of the country the way you intend?"

"Not to do that would be very stupid indeed." He spoke emphatically, almost as much to convince himself as to reassure her. And he knew that the point worrying him had been exposed.

He said goodbye to her and walked back to the hotel, but the thought was still with him. Why, he wondered, did he even bother to question any alternative to the way he intended to leave the country? He was going off tomorrow to Belgrade, going home, and behind him he was leaving Joseph and Franja with detailed instructions for their escape. To go with them would only add to their risks. He recalled Madame Androsh's remark that he arranged escapes for others but left them with the final difficulties. Was there some pride that wanted to force him this time to share the difficulties? If there were, he knew, even while he argued with himself, that it would be unsatisfied. To follow his pride would only increase the dangers which he set other people. Yet he wanted to go.

Towards the end of dinner Colonel Grol, self-invited, eager for conversation, joined him for coffee. For a while he was glad of the company, hoping it would break the persistent

line of his thoughts. But after a few exchanges, he found himself content to listen, still pursuing some elusive reason for the desire in him to go on the escape with Franja. Now and again the heavy voice of Grol boomed across his attention. The man was talking about machines, expounding a philosophy born in the minute and soon to be discarded.

"A good machine does what it was designed to do. It isn't complicated by a conscience. Only one thing can stop it—a mechanical fault, and these are generally imposed on it by men. Lovely machines, so reliable . . ." He stretched back in his chair and made it creak unmercifully. Hudson turned his head, seeing across the harbor mouth the light-spangled arch of the Gradska Kavana and above it the black bulk of the town reaching up to the star-dusted sweep of sky. Franja was singing there now . . . Grol's voice boomed on, ". . . and what is man? A mucky, disorganized, unaesthetically shaped creature who has been his own despair since time began. Give me a machine any time. Get a man in action on a definite course and he has the damned ability to change his mind. Think of the ecstasy it would be to be a piston, up and down, up and down . . ."

Hudson smiled, knowing that Grol was enjoying his own sententiousness. But he agreed with him about changing one's mind. That was it. He wanted to change his mind and he couldn't find a good enough reason. Wasn't even sure that he wanted to find a reason.

Grol was so fascinated by his theory now that he was maintaining that oil was more precious than life blood and, seen in the right light, of an infinitely richer coloring. Hudson saw Joseph, who had been standing at the terrace edge beyond their table, turn and come to the table. In the soft glow of the table lights, moving out of the dark tracery of shadows under the trailing flower creeper, his face was suddenly macabre, molded with deep incisions of shade and light, thoughtful, frowning, almost a little angry. He leaned over

the table and filled their coffee cups and for a moment his eyes were on Hudson. Hudson knew he had been listening to Grol and something about the man, memories of past talk, gave him an arbitrary conviction that Joseph was watching him, Joseph was listening to them, Joseph was trusting no one . . . Joseph was alone, would always be alone, and when the moment of danger came would fight and cheat to stay alone, to go on surviving. Madame Androsh might trust him, but she would never trust Joseph. And he wouldn't trust Joseph either, not in the last moment of action when choice had to be made . . .

"If only God had been a machine and had created us in His likeness we'd all be living in a well-oiled, smoothly running Paradise . . ."

Grol roared with laughter at himself, and Joseph went away, but as the laughter died Hudson knew why he wanted to go with Franja. If anything went wrong and she embarrassed Joseph's movements, he would abandon her without a thought or qualm. If he did join them, he knew that Joseph would be angry—seeing only the increase of danger to them all. But the prospect of Joseph's anger had no effect on him.

He went up to his room, knowing that before he slept he had to decide. The problem was open and had to be examined and solved. He threw himself on his bed and lay there smoking. Nothing was likely to go wrong on the island. But if it did? Why was he so anxious about the girl? Slowly he began to distrust that anxiety. It wasn't anxiety, it was more than that. The risk of anything going wrong was a fair one, fair enough for anyone to accept . . . and yet he didn't want the girl to take that risk with only Joseph at her side.

Milo Lepovitch was in the middle of his report when Denje, the police agent, was shown into his room. Denje, after the first brief exchange of greeting, stood nodding gravely as Lepovitch gave him his instructions. He knew all about

Hudson, and he knew all about Lepovitch, and he trusted neither of them. But he knew his job and not for a moment did it occur to him to question it, much as he disliked the thought of the long train journey to Belgrade. He would be on his feet in the corridor most of the time, and when other people could get food or drink he would have to be on the alert. He shifted his feet now, aware of the discomfort in advance. He would be denied the relief of taking his shoes off and putting his feet up on the seat. The corn under the patch on his right shoe would be flaming with pain before the job was done.

"He's leaving on the five o'clock train. There's a seat reserved for him in the same compartment as Madame Androsh. You'll be in the next compartment. You know what to do. If he goes right through to Belgrade, then he'll be picked up there by our men on a passport check."

"What happens if he leaves the train before Belgrade?" The prospect of chasing over the hills after Hudson depressed Denje.

"I don't think he will. But if he does—don't try to stop him. If you can, give him the impression that he has got away without being seen. But the moment he leaves the train, you get on the telephone—even if it means going five or ten miles on to the next station—and let me know at once. We'll have every post on the watch for him. I don't want him caught. I want him followed. Is that clear?"

"Yes."

"And if he is going to leave the train—he'll probably do it sometime within the first thirty miles."

"He knows me quite well. Would a man unknown to him be better?" Denje made the comment without hope.

Lepovitch frowned at him.

"He'd know any man I put on the train with him in less than twenty minutes. It's an advantage that he knows you—he knows which man to avoid when he escapes and you can

pretend enough stupidity to let him escape. How long have you been with Zarko?"

"Three years."

"And before that?"

"I was a shipping clerk at Gruz before the war."

"Partisan?"

Denje nodded. "With the same brigade as Comrade Zarko."

"I see." There was a dry, derogatory quality in the phrase which did not escape Denje.

Lepovitch dismissed him and went back to his report, finishing it with a paragraph that had been forming in his mind ever since the morning—

. . . Commissar Zarko, as I expected, manifested a definite intransigence over the change of authority. He went so far as to question the good sense behind the order, and implied that headquarters were unwarrantably interfering in this affair. He is a man whose personality draws him towards a dangerous egotism. He is not used to having his authority questioned, and to this end has surrounded himself with a staff whose loyalty—based on past associations—never leads to any criticism of his almost fascist conception of himself as the sole arbiter of power in this town. Personally I think he is not only ideologically unsound, but mentally warped by the power which lies in his hands as Chief of Police.

DAY TWELVE

Hudson looked up from the magazine he had been reading, to find Madame Androsh watching him. The late afternoon sun cut through the compartment window, flickering in a changing pattern of light and shade as the train climbed slowly along the tree-bordered track. They had the compartment to themselves. On the window was a white sticker announcing that the compartment was reserved for Russian officers and government officials. For the purpose of this journey Zarko had decided that the two were to be regarded as officials. Now and again—other passengers wandering up and down the corridor stopped, frowned enviously into the compartment, read the notice and with the momentary pouting of lips which showed clearly what they thought of government officials and Russian officers moved on. Only one passenger remained outside. This was Denje. He was leaning on the window bar in the corridor, his back to Hudson and Madame Androsh, his eyes taking a weary disinterest in the grey mountain slopes, the smooth-barked acacia trees with their bunches of browning blossoms. At times a great pall of streaming smoke and steam would sweep back from the straining engine and the grit and smut swirling through the half-open corridor window, which had defied all Denje's efforts to move it, attacked his eyes and nose with a malevolence which made him swear softly to himself. They, he thought, were all right; comfortable in their compartment, plenty of room to put their feet up, and no doubt a well-

filled case of food and drink. In his own compartment, shared with eight others, he had in a cheap brown suitcase an onion, a piece of cheese, half a brown loaf and a bottle of thin wine. He began to wish that Hudson would leave the train. It would dispense with a lot of discomfort which otherwise lay ahead of him.

Madame Androsh's look went from Hudson to the thin back of Denje.

"Comrade Zarko has sent someone to see you safely off the premises?"

Hudson dropped his magazine. "We're old friends. I've often wondered if I ought to tip him when we part."

"Poor man."

"It's his job."

"But not a very nice one."

"It'll soon be over. Sooner then he thinks."

She looked across at him sharply and the marked eyebrows were raised slightly. He knew she understood.

"I wondered about that," she said slowly. "You know, it's not easy to ask you questions. I've tried to avoid that in the past—for the good of us both. Now I'm going to ask."

"You haven't got very long."

She made no immediate reply. The train rattled through a cut and the compartment was in shadow for a while. She lit a cigarette and then through the smoke, said, "Did you know you were going to do this when you were talking to me last night?"

"No."

"Does Franja know it?"

"No."

"Why did you decide to help her to leave the country?"

"Because she helped me and might be in trouble after I left."

"The same might be said about me."

"No." He shook his head, watching the smoke drift be-

tween them, softening for a while the hard color and wrinkled skin of the old face. "I've not involved you. You know how to look after yourself."

"Why have you changed your mind?"

"Because I don't trust the man she's going with to look after her if there's trouble."

"I see." She smiled at him suddenly and then put out a hand and touched his knee. "I'm glad you feel like that. Though for the moment I don't think you understand why."

Although he could sense the gratitude in her, Hudson had the feeling that she was also laughing quietly to herself about him, enjoying some gentle joke which evoked in her an affection for him which he could not understand. He leaned back against the cushions, embarrassed for a moment, and stared at the shielded light bulb.

Madame Androsh glanced towards the corridor. Denje had a hand behind his back and was scratching the point on his backbone where his braces rubbed him.

The wheels of the train beat a slow tattoo against the rails and suddenly Hudson had a vivid picture in his mind of Franja going down on the early morning tram to Gruz to go aboard the steamer for Metilini. She would be scared stiff and no one would know it. And while she was doing it he might have been sitting in this same compartment with Madame Androsh, running across the valley towards Belgrade. Seven o'clock in the morning with a freshness over the fields and cool shadows under the trees and that bright, picture-book clarity touching everything, the scratching hens before the pink-washed houses, the cattle in the fields and the still figures of peasants halted in their work by the passage of the train, but threading her way through the timber stacks on the dock at Gruz would be Franja with the sea wind lifting her hair and schooling her light dress against her body as she walked with fear in her heart towards the Militia guard who checked the *karakteristikas* of all who went aboard the steam-

boat. He was glad now that that morning he had studied the steamboat schedules behind the reception clerk as he paid his bill, and that he had spent part of the morning going over the maps which had travelled with him from Belgrade. He lowered his head and saw that Madame Androsh had taken some knitting from her bag. Her hands moved automatically with the needles and she kept her eyes on him, the painted mouth pouted in a small smile.

"Well?"

Hudson leaned over and fingered the knitting.

"What's this?"

"Bedsocks." She paused for a moment, dropping her knitting to reach into her bag again and bring out a small silver flask. "I've no doubt that you've convinced yourself with some good reason which isn't the right one still. But I'm not worried about that. When do you go and how?"

"In about ten minutes—when we go into the first of the tunnels. I shall go into the lavatory and out through the window."

"You'll hurt yourself." Momentarily there was a note of maternal concern.

"Not at this speed—maybe a scratch or two."

She handed the flask across to him.

"What's this?"

"A parting present."

He unscrewed the cap.

"Whiskey. Thank you. A nice flask, too."

"Yes. My husband brought it from Baghdad years ago. What about your friend out there?" She nodded towards Denje's back.

"All I want is half an hour's start. The tunnel ought to give me that. You'd better go on with your knitting, but when I've had half an hour it might be well if you began to be worried."

"If I were fifteen years younger and not convinced that the

pursuit of happiness is an illusion deliberately designed to keep men and women in a healthy state of motion, I'd come with you. But these days I'm content to enjoy myself vicariously."

A little later Hudson rose to leave the compartment. Seeing that Denje was occupied with the scenery on the far side of the train, Hudson bent and kissed her on the cheek. There was no need for words between them. He drew the sliding door and disappeared down the corridor. When he was gone, she dropped her knitting to her lap, and stared at the seat where he had been sitting and for a moment her eyes flickered against the sting of eye-black as she held back her tears. When she turned her head, it was to see that Denje had moved out of sight too. She picked up her needles and began to knit.

There were two vertical brass bars across the lavatory window. The screws holding them to the top of the panel came away easily from the old woodwork as Hudson wrenched at them. The bars dropped, swinging loosely from the bottom of the panel, touching one another with a faint ringing sound as the train swayed. Hudson stood there, watching the changing play of light on the opaque glass. The moment the door was shut and bolted behind him he had felt excitement rise in him. He waited now for the tunnel, for the sudden darkness and the change in rhythm of the train's noise, and he felt the beat of his heart steadying slowly. The place had a bad smell, the faucet over the dirty basin leaked complainingly. He leaned back against the basin and raised his right foot, placing it against the glass. The pressure between glass and basin held him steady and he waited, remembering a moment long ago in his boyhood when he had picked up a stone and thrown it through his aunt's greenhouse. There had been an almost pagan exultation in that act. But now there was no exultation, only a practical concern with the possibility of

cutting his leg, an odd memory of a notice somewhere on some train about damage to railway property and the punishment for such offenses. The rolling stock in Yugoslavia was still bad. It was a pity to add to its shabbiness . . .

A shadow darkened the window, the note of the wheels changed, cut by short-lived shrieks as though the tunnel outside were blocked with angry spirits, thrust aside by the climbing train. Hudson drew his foot back and jabbed hard. The nails in his boot slipped on the glass and the heel of his boot thudded against the edge of the wooden panel. Momentarily he panicked with the thought that he might not be able to smash the glass. Then he drew his foot back again and jabbed. The glass cracked and in the darkness he could hear the fracture run out along its surface like ice giving. He jabbed again and heard the glass fall, and a foul belch of smoke and steam swept into the place. He kicked again, holding himself secure by the basin and quickly worked the hole wider, jerking at the sharp edges, hearing the glass fall to the track, the noise taken up in the growl and shriek of the train. He worked away in the dark until he judged the hole was big enough. Then, after feeling around it cautiously with his hands, he drew back, took off his jacket and placed it over the jagged lower edge. He put one leg through the hole sitting astride the coat-pad. As he twisted himself to bring his other leg out the train swayed and he was thrown sideways. He felt his face brush against glass at the top side of the panel. Then he was through, hanging by his hands, his knees pressed against the side of the coach. Darkness, smoke and sound tore against his body. Looking over his right shoulder he saw the distant pin point of the tunnel's entrance. He let his knees slide down until his whole weight was on his hands. He hung there for a moment, his body swinging gently, vibrating to the beat of the wheels over the lines. He let go.

His feet hit the ground and swept past him, throwing him backwards. A black hand came up and smacked him in the

side with a hearty bonhomie that knocked the breath from him. Then he was rolling, feeling the granite chips tearing against his back. He hit the side of the tunnel and lay spread-eagled on his back in a thin sluice of water. Behind him the noise of the train drew away. He stood up, bruised and shaken, and began to walk towards the distant circle of light. When he reached the end of the tunnel he found himself at the head of a long, twisting valley in the mountains down the left-hand side of which ran the railway. He started to brush himself off. As he did so he saw that his right hand was covered with blood. A freshet spouted from a culvert at the side of the tunnel and he went to it to wash himself. Below the freshet, drawn back in a hollow of the stream bed was a small pool. As he bent over this he saw that his face was grimed with smuts and that vertically down his right cheek was a long, thin cut from which blood was seeping over his face. He remembered the touch of his cheek against the glass as he worked through the window. Cursing gently he began to wash himself . . .

Five minutes later he was on his way down the valley, holding a handkerchief to his cheek, his shirt open-necked, the sleeves rolled up. His trousers were dirty, scagged at the knees, and he looked shabby and unkempt enough to pass as a worker. It was six o'clock and there were twenty-five miles between him and Gruz, twenty-five miles which were clear in his head from the map, twenty-five miles which he had from now until early the next morning to cover. He had to avoid people and roads, and for the worst part of the journey he would have the cover of darkness. He moved down the stream, making for the great sweep of pines on the far side of the valley. As walking began to take the stiffness from his bruised limbs, he noticed for the first time that the stream was bordered with thick pads of yellow flags and that from the turf as he trod on it rose a sharp smell of mint. He held

himself carefully from optimism or confidence, content to wait, but as he walked he began to whistle gently to himself.

The message came through to Lepovitch from Denje at half-past six. Lepovitch was with Zarko in his room. Zarko watched him as he stood with the receiver in his hand, tall, thin, his mouth a little angry, nodding curtly as Denje talked away. Zarko leaned back in his chair and tapped his teeth with his paper-knife. Lepovitch put the receiver down and walked to the map on the wall. Zarko followed him.

"He's left the train?" He saw no reason to disguise the satisfaction in his voice since he knew that Lepovitch had never believed that Hudson would do this.

"Yes. Twenty-five miles out. At the first tunnel on the other side of Ravno." His pencil came down on the map and ringed the small hill town.

"So—he's coming back."

Lepovitch looked at him sharply. He tapped the map. "Look at it—doesn't it begin to make sense to you? He's twenty-five miles from us, but only about twelve miles in a straight line from the coast. If he goes straight to the coast he'll be at a point almost a third of the way along to Makarska. And tomorrow evening Colonel Grol is getting the boat for Makarska."

Zarko shrugged his shoulders. "It's a matter of opinion. I think he's coming back here."

"We shall soon know. We have every post watching for him. Denje said he went out through the lavatory window, leaving his jacket behind him." Then, because the irritation was there and could not be passed, "Why on earth should he come back here?"

Zarko turned away to the window. The sun was touching the old tiles of Sveti Jacov with a patina of gold, a dusty splendor which was like the antique scaling on some slumbering monster. For the moment he was tired of the whole busi-

ness and wished he had remained a wheelwright like his father. One worked until one was tired and saw something for it, and then one went home and ate and slept, made love and had children, got drunk when the wind was in the wrong quarter and never worried with one's own or other people's ambitions and hopes.

"I don't know," he said suddenly. "But I do know this. If I were going to meet someone in Makarska, I wouldn't get off at Ravno. I'd wait until I was the other side of the Netetva river, almost up to Mostar before I jumped. No sensible man gives himself a longer walk than necessary . . ."

Lepovitch made an impatient sound. "No sensible man would do the obvious thing. This Hudson is no fool."

Zarko smiled. "I decided that the first day I met him."

Lepovitch made no reply. He turned away to the door. There was work to be done and instructions to be given. Zarko watched him go, and for the first time he found himself hoping that Hudson would make a fool of Lepovitch, but the thought was no sooner with him than he pushed it aside. There were some forms of disloyalty which he could imagine, but not entertain. He went over to the map and began to study it carefully.

Hudson almost stepped on the man. He stopped dead but it was too late. The man was lying full length in the sun behind a bank of dwarfed myrtle bushes, his tunic unbuttoned, his rifle by his side and a cigarette cocked up from the corner of his mouth. He got up, and, for a moment before he frowned, his face had a vacuous, apologetic smile as though he had been discovered by some superior lazing while on duty.

From the hill above Ravno, Hudson had kept well up to the left of the rough road that wound up and over the grey block of karst and finally down to the sea at Slano. He was over the crest now, high above the road, with the sea and coast spread out below him like a relief artfully real with

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false shadows and clever painting, gold, blue, grey and black with tiny cotton-ball shreddings of cloud. Until this moment the only life he had seen had been a small group of peasants who had passed him on the opposite side of a valley near Ravno. They had waved and called from the distance and he had waved back. For two hours after that he had kept on, alone in the hills, working south along small tracks and watching the sun lowering itself cautiously towards the sea in the west like a swimmer knowing he must plunge but reluctantly opposed to the moment of shock. And now at a bend in the small track, where myrtle and gorse banked itself along the edge of an outcrop, he had almost stepped on the man's outflung hands as he lay back peacefully smoking.

The guard faced him, realizing his disadvantage, both of them aware of the rifle that lay on the ground at his feet. He put up a hand and touched the jaunty Militia cap with its red star badge into position.

"Where are you going, comrade?" His voice was hoarse with phlegm.

Hudson gave no answer. He was thinking; you're as surprised as I am, and for the moment you don't know what to do. And he had to admit that he, as well, had no clear line of action. The man frowned at the silence and then began to lean forward, a slight drawing up of shoulders preparatory to reaching for his rifle. Hudson hit him. It was the first time in his life he had ever hit a man in the face with his bare fist. The man grunted and went down, crouching on his knees for a moment, throwing out his hands for balance. Hudson hit him again. The man dropped back on the turf, one leg buckled under him, and a dark, indecent trickle of blood oozed unwillingly from one nostril.

Hudson dropped to his side and against his own disgust, he went methodically through his pockets. He stole all his cigarettes except two. He took the magazine and cartridges from his rifle, the boots from his feet and a small package of food

which was tucked inside the blue battle-dress blouse. He went on, casting higher up the hill now, away from the track, and as he went he jettisoned at long intervals the cartridges, the magazine and the boots. Once, turning back from a bare spur, he saw the guard still lying, a crumpled, distant figure far behind him. Then he was over the spur and edging along the range with the sea on his right three thousand feet below, washing at the base of the great tumble and sweep of grey stone and boulders. The villages and coast road, the dusty olive growths and stone-edged patchwork of fields, were spread before him, small and toylike. A little later the sun dropped into the sea, and evening fanned across the hills and water like the beat of a great bird's wing, chilling the air and driving all color from the earth, and Hudson felt suddenly depressed. He drank some of Madame Androsh's whiskey as he walked, chewed at the guard's slab of dark bread which was spread thickly with a garlic-flavored paste.

Fifteen minutes before midnight, he was on the lower slopes of the hills above Gruz. Through the darkness ahead of him he could see the white cones of the arc lamps on the landing quays, the lights from the houses strung along the tram track and the pale gleam of the cream hulls of the coast steamers lying alongside. There was an hour's walk ahead of him before he would be down off the mountain. He rested, smoking a cigarette in the lee of a boulder, knowing that what he had to do was better left as late as possible. His real danger began the moment he reached the road at Gruz and crossed on to the landing quay. He smoked, feeling the coldness of the fresh night air striking through his shirt, and now and again he flexed his right cheek to ease the stiffness which marked the line of the cut, which was taut with dry blood. Somewhere to his left a nightjar called, and a great grey moth came beating on cushioned wings past him. Far below, the arc lamps made little blinding sections of light and under the thin stars, the inclosed waters of Gruz bay shone with the

dark, rich gleam of stropped leather while beyond the land the sea spread away in a waste of grey, Gothic mystery, the black forms of the coast islands strewn about it like untidy corpses, a battlefield of mutilated giants, still in the night.

In Dubrovnik, at the Hotel Argentina, Colonel Grol was lying on his bed, naked except for his pajama trousers, a book propped upon his pink belly, his head padded into a comfortable reading angle by four pillows, a cigarette in a long holder jutting from the corner of his mouth, a glass of orange juice within reach on the bedside table. The book was an army manual on the deployment of infantry troops in guerilla warfare, a book which he found methodical, intelligent, not without a touch of humor, and quite his favorite reading—for the excellent reason that he had written it himself.

On the floor above him Joseph was sitting cross-legged on the floor behind a locked door. He wore singlet and pants and was carefully renewing a long strip of adhesive plaster which he fastened to the inner side of his left arm near the shoulderpit. Underneath the plaster was a small glass phial which, if circumstances merited it, would induce a silence which not even OZNA could break. As he worked he whistled a Stravinsky phrase from *Petrushka* and wondered what had become of a coryphée who had once danced in it at Paris when he had been a student. In the end she had become a nuisance and he had abandoned her—as he would always abandon anyone who endangered his chosen work.

Across the water, on Lokrum, Yelitsa was bent over a wooden trough in the long, stone-flagged wash-house, under a single light washing the twenty-three patched and neatly sewn vests of the twenty-three girl orphans. If she wanted to get away by ten o'clock the next morning the work had to be done before she left. Her hands were puffed and red under the thin light and her back ached a little. Tomorrow Sandro and Tulio would leave the garrison on Metilini and by mid-

night they would be home and she would be there to greet them. Her thoughts went to Luca. She remembered the first time he had ever kissed her, so many years ago in an embrasure of the buttresses of the Benedictine monastery below Mount Sergio, and how she had slapped his face when he tried to put his hand inside her bodice and how the strength to go on slapping had deserted her when she had felt his rough hand on her warm breast and the weakness had begun which had never left her . . .

And back in Dubrovnik in the villa with the blue dome, Franja lay in bed staring into the half-darkness, remembering the wink which the clerk in the Putnik offices had given her earlier in the day when she had gone to buy an excursion ticket for the next day to Metilini, saying "You've got too pretty a face to put a mask on it." At the festival in the evening, everyone wore masks and danced, but she would need a mask all day . . . She wondered if she would stay in Dubrovnik after all . . . but she knew she wouldn't. She stared at the white shape of her dress hanging behind the door, the dress she had washed and pressed for tomorrow, the dress she had worn when Hudson had kissed her in the villa garden . . .

Above Sveti Jacov, in Zarko's room, there was silence. Both men were there. Zarko was pouring a tumbler of water on to the earth in his flower pot and Lepovitch was sitting in Zarko's place at the desk. On the desk were two empty *rakia* glasses. Zarko began to whistle, gently, irritatingly, and Lepovitch on the top sheet of the pad of paper before him was drawing a succession of crescent moons with stars cradled in their chords. Zarko came back to the desk and put down the tumbler. His waistcoat was unbuttoned and he scratched his paunch carefully.

"Well," he tried to sound sympathetic, "there's no point in both of us staying awake all night. One of us could turn in for a couple of hours."

"I'm not sleeping." Lepovitch spoke curtly.

"As you like. There's a couch in the room next door. I'll have a couple of hours and then relieve you. We must just accept the fact that for the time being we've lost him."

"Four hours! Not a sign of him for four hours. When I get that guard in here, he's going to be sorry. They're cattle, just stupid cattle!"

Lepovitch's anger overflowed, a cutting sound in the bright room.

"Oh, I don't know . . ." Zarko knew his tolerance would annoy and he watched the point of the pencil pressing deeply against the white paper as the other drew. ". . . the man had no alternative. They meet on a *corner*—what can you expect?"

"I gave instructions that he was to be watched and his movements reported here. The man was asleep and Hudson was on top of him before he knew it. Anyway, it shows he was heading for Slano—"

"Which to you means Makarska?"

"You know it does. He must have got that cut getting out of the window. Blue shirt, grey trousers, brown boots and a cut on the right cheek. Who could miss a man like that?"

Zarko moved towards the door. "Except for the cut, there must be plenty of men between here and Makarska wearing a blue shirt and grey trousers." Then, despite himself, touched by the anxiety in Lepovitch, knowing the responsibility he carried, he added kindly, "Don't worry—we've still got Grol, and as soon as it's light someone will get on to Hudson. If you feel like a drink while you're waiting—you know where the bottle is." He went out.

Lepovitch sat without moving for a while. Then with abrupt movement he opened the desk cupboard and took out the *rakia* bottle. He poured himself a glass, drank half of it and then picked up his pen. Habit was strong in him and he

had his report to make. He began to write rapidly, his anger and nervousness forcing him on.

By the time this report reaches you I feel confident that this whole affair will have reached, or be on the point of reaching, a satisfactory conclusion. It is only a matter of time now before we have all the proof and all the traitors concerned. Hudson, today, has by his actions shown clearly that he is the foreign agent we have always suspected. I have never had any doubt of this and events have proved it. . . .

He paused to drink the rest of the *rakia.* But when he took up his pen again he found the ability to go on had deserted him. He read what he had written, found it tedious and evasive and knew that it would read with those qualities. He tore the sheet up and sat back. He would have to think carefully before he wrote. Facts, they were the only things that mattered at this moment. To give an opinion now that might later be proved wrong was dangerous. Facts. He sat for a long time, thinking. Then he reached out for another sheet and began to write. His first sentence was indicative of the whole tenor of one of the shortest reports he had so far written.

Hudson left Dubrovnik today on the five o'clock train for Belgrade in the company of Madame Androsh . . .

DAY THIRTEEN

Although it was three o'clock in the morning there was still a certain amount of activity on the dockside. Under the arc lights from deck and shore, an Egyptian cargo boat was loading timber, and a string of men was carrying wicker panniers of coal aboard one of the coastal steamers. The air was piquant with the smell of coal and the sweet, dry tang of pine lengths. Now and again an armed guard moved out of the shadows, strolling easily along the length of the quayside, stopping to chat to a seaman at the end of a gangplank. In the darkness of an angle made by two enormous piles of timber, Hudson watched the guards. There were four of them and, although they seemed to have no system in their movements, he noticed that each kept rigidly to a definite area. He had come down off the hills an hour before and, waiting in the lee of a dockside eating-house, had crossed the lighted stretch of road with a gang of stevedores who had come out and moved across to the quayside. He had tailed on behind them and slipped away once they were moving through the stacks of timber. There was no wire round the dock area, as he knew from previous visits. The guards were there to prevent unauthorized persons from going aboard the ships. Stowing-away from this country was a crime which carried many implications and the severest penalties.

The *Brac*, which was the steamboat that would carry excursionists to Metilini, was lying lower down the dockside, beyond the Egyptian boat. While he had been waiting he

had seen her coaling finish, watched the deckhands sweep and wash her clean amidships and now there was no sign of life aboard. A single light, just below the bridge made a pool of shadows in the well between after- and foredecks. After six the first trams would come rumbling down the hill from Dubrovnik and the excursionists would go aboard, a guard at the gangway checking each identity card. When that happened, he had to be on the *Brac*. At Metilini, the problem of getting off the boat without showing his ticket would have to be faced.

He began to move now, working his way through the timber stacks towards the far end of the dock, keeping to the shadows and edging nearer to the last line of stacks. Fifty yards below the *Brac* the quayside was deserted, but in full light from an overhanging arc. He had to cross it to reach the water. He waited in the shadow of the last stack, watching the guard by the Egyptian ship. He turned and began to walk down the dockside. He passed the *Brac*, came on until he was under the full light of the arc, the untanned leather of his equipment almost bone-white against his uniform. He paused for a moment at the water-edge, kicked a stone over the side and then turned back. Hudson watched him go, knowing that a suspicious sound would make him swing round, shake all the casualness from the slack walk and bring the slung rifle into readiness. He waited until the guard was between the *Brac* and the other ship and then moved out into the light. He walked quickly, watching his step, picking the soft patches of earth and dried bark. Then he was at the dockside where a small flight of stone steps, rich with darkness, led down to the water. He went down the steps, and sat, a foot above the water, waiting and listening. From up the quayside came the rattle of a winch and the low thunder of men's feet on a swaying gangplank. Fifty yards from him the white length of the *Brac* hugged the dock wall. In a few minutes the guard would be coming back.

He slipped, fully dressed, into the water and felt for the bottom, but his feet dropped touching nothing. For a moment his head went under and he felt his skin contract at the coldness of the water on his hot body. He came up and began to swim slowly, keeping his movements gentle and unhurried, hugging the dark corridor of shadow thrown by the dockside. After a time he paused, holding to the quay-wall, listening. He heard the distant sound of voices, then closer, the regular beat of a heavy boot striking against the dock cobbles. He drew into the wall, holding to the wet stones with his hands, his body heavy with soaked clothes, drawn downwards, pressed clammily against the algæ-smooth wall face. The guard was coming back. He could see the man's shadow, cast by the strong light, make a blunt finger that ran along the top of the wall shadow on the water like a slowly moving indicator. It came haltingly down to him, passed him and ran on as far as the steps. He hung to the wall, schooling his breath, the long intake of air through his nostrils thick with the odors of salt and ship's refuse. The guard came back and passed him and Hudson heard the man humming to himself.

He swam on and, a few seconds later, was clinging to the counter of the *Brac* on her starboard side, in shadow away from the dock. The low, yacht-shaped stern swept down so that the gunwale was only about three feet above water. Hudson gripped the flange of a stern plating and, dropping his body low into the water to gain buoyancy, drew himself up quickly and grasped the smooth rail. He hauled himself up until his head was above the rail and the water, streaming from his shirt, started a thin play of sound in the night. The open stern was deserted and beyond it the dockside showed no sign of life. He drew himself up further, rolled and had a leg over the side. He dropped inboard and in four steps was in the cover of the over-hanging after-promenade deck. Before him was the dark entrance to the ship's dining saloon,

and on either side of the door, jutting out to make a small recess in front of the door itself, were two box-like structures, marked with doors. Over the door on his left was the word *Nuznik*. With a smile, he remembered the small boy in the Museum on the day he had talked to Sandro.

He crossed to the door and went in. It was dark inside but gradually his eyes began to make sense of his surroundings. He was in a small compartment which held a wash-basin, a roller towel and a mirror. Opening off it to the left were two stalls. There was a musty, rank smell which caught at Hudson's throat. Hygiene, he thought, was something the European races had little concern with, but, at least, he was safe here until the morning. Whatever crew slept aboard were already in their quarters forward and they probably had their own lavatory. This one would not be used except by passengers.

He looked at his watch. It was three-thirty. He had four hours to go before they would be at sea. He fished in his pocket for his whiskey, drained the last of it and was glad of the momentary warmth. Then he stripped, wringing out his clothes until he could get no more water from them. He struggled into them, grimacing against their clamminess. They would dry quicker on him and if he were disturbed it was better not to be naked. Then, with a resignation arising out of limited choice, he opened one of the stall doors and sat down on the only seat available. So far, he had done what he had planned to do. A curious excitement began to rise in him. Despite his tiredness and discomfort, he felt at home with himself and, for the moment, absolved from any misgivings. It was good just to sit and rest and wait for the morning. Gradually relaxation from the strain of suspense increased his tiredness and he felt his eyelids growing heavy. He leaned back against the damp wall and was asleep before the coldness of the steel plate had worked through the steamy warmth of his shirt and waistcoat.

At eight o'clock the *Brac* was clear of Gruz bay and beginning to roll a little in the southeasterly swell which was taking her on the port beam and now and then raising small scuds of spray which marked the grey boards of the break amidships with large, wet stipplings. Franja, a light mackintosh over her dress as protection against the fresh morning breeze, sat on the after-promenade deck, in the lee of the bridge house and watched the mainland sliding away at an angle. Every color was immaculate, jewel-clean in the sharp sunlight. The opaline sea, frayed with upthrown crystal fronds where the wind whipped the lip of the racing crests, spread away to the dark jade line of trees, pocked with the ivory and amber of houses and villas, that ringed the distant mainland. Above the trees, powder yellow and downy grey the rising foothills and thin fields reached up to the sharply-edged scarps and peaks of the mountains, remote against the cold-blue distance of the sky. Detail was lost and only color remained, and she was for a while sad with the thought that a country which she loved was forcing her from it. The emotion in her was touched and heightened by the sound of a mandolin and an accordian played further down the deck by a party of boys and girls who were singing an old folk song. The deck was crowded with excursionists, some like herself wrapped against the wind in raincoats, others, hardy and uncaring, in shorts and open-necked shirts. In the youth party some of the girls were already lying on the deck, their shorts drawn up, arms and throats bare, shining with oil to catch the browning sun. One or two soldiers, in mustard yellow uniforms, were hunched up against their equipment on the center run of seats. The boat was going on to Hvar after dropping the excursionists at Metilini and would not be returning until midnight to pick them up. It was a mixed crowd, swarming over the boat, packed on the decks, huddled for shelter in the well amidships, crowding the dining saloon where she had managed to get coffee as they sailed; old folk,

peasants going back to the islands after a visit to the mainland, townsfolk from Dubrovnik going to Metilini for the festival, a few sailors returning on leave to their island homes, the tail ribbons whipping from their flat caps which bore the gold legend *Ratna Mornarica*, students, holding the pages of their books firm against the wind . . . and everywhere the young people, happy, shouting and calling, singing, drowning the mandolin and the accordion with the strength of their voices. In this country the young were happy, they worked and they sang, they were privileged, they travelled cheaply, they ate as well as anyone . . . and in return they had only to believe and profess what they were taught in their schools and in their Tito Youth clubs. For youth, it was an easy bargain. They began to sing a partisan song in praise of Tito, and Franja, looking back towards the after-end of the deck, at the rail above the stern, saw that Joseph—who had made no sign of recognition to her—was singing too. He was leaning back, singing lustily with the rest of the passengers there. For a moment she watched him, smiling. He wore an old pair of pin-striped trousers, a Norfolk shooting jacket, sandals, a checked shirt, and over his crisp hair a small grey beret. He looked odd, but no odder than many of the other passengers. Yugoslavia was not a well-dressed country; there were other things more important than nicety in clothes. One wore what one had. She watched him for a while and noticed that he seemed on friendly terms with those around him, and she contrasted his easiness of manner with her own vibrant anxiety. When the Militia guard had checked her identity card at the gangway she had kept her eyes on his hands, not daring to risk looking at his face, holding herself almost angrily against the apprehension in her that he might question her, but he had handed the card back and she had come aboard. And now, in two hours, she would be at Metilini with all the day to pass, wrapped up in her own thoughts and fears.

She got up after a while and went down the companionway. To sit in one place long was impossible. She went up to the high forward deck, meeting the full strength of the wind. There were fewer people on this deck and they were mostly country folk going back to their homes, roughly dressed, sturdy men and women, young peasant girls in long black dresses, their heads wrapped in scarves, colored pompoms of wool swinging at their bodice fronts. She sat down with her back to a large hamper, part of the luggage piled in the middle of the deck, and it was then that she saw Hudson. At first she was uncertain. He was lying a yard from her, resting on his right side, his face cradled against his arm, his body curled in the sun. Near him a group of women squatted, knitting. Other men lay about in the sun in the shelter of the various pieces of luggage.

She looked at the curled length of the long body, at the creased blue shirt which was torn below the shoulder, at the stained grey trousers and shabby boots and for a moment, despite the catch in her throat, the sudden racing of her heart, she felt she was mistaken. He might have been any rough worker, sleeping away the boredom of the trip. She wanted it to be him, not daring to hope that it was him, but as she looked she knew there was no mistake. She sat there, watching the wind ruffle the loose folds of his shirt, seeing the unshaven line of his cheek. He turned over slowly, blinking his eyes against the sudden glare of the sun, and then he saw her. He looked at her for a while, his face solemn, unmoving as though she were a stranger. Then a smile creased his features and he slewed forward towards her, lying full length, resting on his elbows.

"Surprised?"

At first she could do no more than nod.

"Is Joseph aboard?" He gave her time, watching her. It was as though he had forgotten what she looked like, but seeing her now made the lost memory return, vivid and with

an unexpected freshness, and for a moment he had all the vanity of a hero, knowing the absurd wish to reach out and take her arm, tell her that there was no need to be afraid now because he was here. But the desire was gone almost at once. There was possibly more need for her to be afraid now, for his presence had only increased their danger. Nevertheless he reached out and laid his hand on hers where it rested on the deck.

"He's on board," she said. "But why are you here? Has anything gone wrong?" She tried to keep the happiness from her voice and succeeded in sounding hurried, a little impatient.

"Everything's all right. I changed my mind. I thought this was a better way out than that awful journey from Belgrade up through Ljubliana and Trieste."

It didn't sound like the truth, but she accepted it.

"You've cut your face badly."

"Yes. I don't want to advertise it too much either. Have you had any breakfast?"

She nodded.

"There was an awful crowd in the saloon when I came through. I didn't want to risk it."

"The crowd should have cleared by now."

Hudson rose to his knees.

"I think I'll find a dark corner where I can have coffee and a biscuit. When we get to the island we should be able to get something more substantial. Stay here, I'll be back."

He was gone, and she sat, feeling the slow movement of the hamper to the roll of the ship behind her, and she found that she was content to sit. The desire to keep moving had left her and she was strangely at ease. For some reason he had come back, not because he had disliked a train journey, for he had told her that he was to fly from Belgrade. Perhaps there was some danger, something had gone wrong, but not even that could disquiet her now.

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In the saloon Hudson found himself a seat in a corner, where his cut face was turned from the other passengers. He was sure that the guard he had met must have seen the wound and anyone who was looking out for him would not miss it. The waiter brought him a cup of tepid coffee and three hard biscuits shaped like tiny quoits and he ate and drank quickly. In his hideaway he had been awakened by the sound of the first passengers coming aboard and he had sat tight in his stall, the door locked, until the steamship was under way. Before he had come out he had tidied himself up in the outer compartment. His clothes had been almost dry and the fresh morning wind had taken the last of the damp from them.

When he had finished he went back to Franja and lay alongside her in the sun. They said little, content just to lie and watch the long shapes of the coast islands pass them. Just after nine o'clock the island of Metilini grew from a blur on the horizon to a long, grey score of mountain and rough olive groves against the pale sky. The island reached away from a jumble of crags above Metilini town in a great sway-back of hills, running twenty miles to the northeast, its full length hidden from them, by the encircling hills above the little bay into which the ship was heading.

The bay itself was a little half-circle, about three hundred yards across, bitten neatly out of the end of the island. The inner curve was lined with a wide, dusty quayside, lying back from which rose the ancient walls of Metilini town, which had once been a Turkish fortress. A great arched doorway led into the town through the wall. Behind rose the red and grey roofs, the ochered face of a church and a climbing tangle of alleyways and courts which honeycombed the houses that sprawled up the side of the steep hillside.

Franja and Hudson stood at the rail as the steamboat swung into the bay, past little groups of moored rowing and fishing boats. Hudson watched a small crowd which moved on the quayside, waiting for the boat. Already from the rail

people were shouting and calling to one another. The steamer backwatered to slacken speed and circled to draw into the landing quay. Hudson drew Franja's attention to an echelon of pines that ran down from the hill above the town.

"I'll have to get ashore by myself. I've no ticket. Get hold of Joseph in the town and then both of you meet me up in those woods when you can."

He left her and went quickly back to the stern. If the people behaved here as he had seen them behave at Gruz when the steamers came in he knew he was going to have no difficulty. Already the stern was packed with eager excursionists. The boy with the accordion was sitting on the rail, playing away, and the youth party were waving and shouting to the people on the nearing quay. Metilini was not far from Dubrovnik and for many this was a visit to old friends.

The steamer bumped gently alongside, a rope was flung from the stern, another from the bow. The gang walk was run out and the Militia guard who was standing in the quayside crowd moved forward and took his place alongside the ship's steward who was taking the passengers' tickets as they left. But the process was slow, and people were impatient. From the well amidships, close to the gangplank people began to step ashore. The steward shouted at them, the guard shouted at them, but they called back happily, greeting friends struggling through the crowd, and when the guard moved up to drive them back another wave broke on to the quay behind him. The youth party around Hudson began to chant a partisan song and the mandolin player stepped over the foot gap of water between ship and shore and the whole party surged after him, shouting and calling to friends in the crowd. There was a swirl of bare brown arms and legs, bright red scarves, and in the wake of the party other passengers scrambled ashore and a few of the crowd on the quay leaped aboard to help friends and visitors with their cases and hampers. In the confusion and laughing, shouting stir of bodies Hudson

stepped ashore too, and walked quietly across the dusty stretch of quayside with its spreading plugs of date palms. He made leisurely to the right towards the far end of the wall and a stretch of sand where a few people were bathing. Above the beach the hill sloped up to the pine wood. He looked back once and saw the crowd still about the boat, breaking now and again as small handcarts came pushing through it to wheel away the heavier luggage and stores which had come from Dubrovnik.

Half an hour later, lying just inside the wood, he heard the ship's hooter blow and then saw her pull away in a curve from the quay and move out towards the open water. She was on her way to Hvar. At midnight she would return. He lay back and lit one of the cigarettes from a packet which Franja had given him. So far, he thought, everything had gone without a hitch. All they had to do now was to wait. He found himself thinking about Zarko. His men would be watching for him, but so far, he felt sure, they had lost him. If they had known about Metilini and Sandro, or followed Franja or Joseph, there would have been more than one guard on the quay below, and they would not have shrugged their shoulders with good-natured helplessness. The holiday mood would have been dampened at once and discipline maintained. But nothing like that had happened, and he was hopeful that so far Zarko must be still looking for him, watching Grol perhaps and waiting for some sign to guide him. Sandro wouldn't be at Metilini until half-past eight or nine, just as it was dark. Twelve hours to go . . . and after that a night crossing to Italy.

It was midday before Yelitsa reached the apartment in the Ulica Jesac. As she went in she was met with the dry, unfriendly smell of a room which has been closed for several days. Dropping her bundle on the table, she crossed to the window to open it. Tulio's geraniums were wilting for water. She went to the sink and filled a pitcher. The water, as she

poured it on the tins, imprisoned clear air bubbles against the baked soil which for a while resisted the moisture, then, with a sudden almost animal greediness, the earth swallowed and sucked down the liquid, leaving the surface dark and porous. She thought of Tulio. He was fond of flowers, and he would be good with children . . .

In the bedroom, taking off her scarf and the small jacket she wore over her dress, she stood before the octagonal mirror leaning out from the wall above the washstand. The dark eyes from her brown face watched herself curiously. She was strong and built to have children, it would be hard if now, when she wanted them, they did not come. She had guarded against it with Luca, been worried sometimes, and now she wondered if perhaps there was something about herself or Tulio which might prevent it. She turned away and putting on an overall began to clean up the apartment. The dust lay thinly over everything. She could eat later. Maybe she would wait until Sandro and Tulio returned. They should be in sometime before midnight, and they would both be hungry. In her bundle were three small pieces of veal which she had stolen from the orphanage kitchen. She began to think of the meal she would prepare . . .

As she moved around, working, she was aware of the heavy midday silence everywhere. There was no sound of life from the ulica. The sun struck across the room in a hard shaft in which imprisoned dust motes circled and fretted. Slowly the silence awoke an uneasiness in her. Ever since she had married this apartment had been her home. She knew it so well. But today the feeling was growing in her that she was a stranger here. She stopped work after a while, disturbed by the silence, and went to the radio above the dresser. But when she turned it on no sound came and she remembered that Tulio was still trying to get a new tube for it. Moving away her eye was caught by the section of wall running from the dresser to the window. In a stepped pyramid, little photo-

graphs and devotional pictures ran up and down the wall, Communion and Easter cards and faded prints of Sandro and the boys in their boat, a view of Gruz from the hills, and a highly colored post card of a peasant standing in full costume at the side of a rearing agave. Yelitsa frowned and stepped forward. In the center of the pyramid, against the green wallpaper, a small rectangle of faded paper showed up clearly. Yelitsa felt a sweep of uneasiness run over her body. She stood looking at the yellowed patch.

When she had left the apartment a photograph had been there, the family group which she knew Sandro cherished of himself and his wife and the two boys. She turned suddenly and went into Sandro's bedroom. It was a small, dark room, broken by the slope of the roof and with an old army camp bed along one wall. She pulled the bed from the wall and knelt in the corner of the room to pull up a loose section of floor board. Underneath the board was a hole between the joists. It was here that Sandro kept his money, not dinars, but forty thousand lire. After the war there had been an order that all Italian currency must be changed—at an unfavorable rate—for dinars. Sandro had never changed his. The hole between the joists was empty. Unwilling to believe what she suspected, Yelitsa went back into her own bedroom. Most of Tulio's clothes were gone. In the kitchen, feeling in the recess at the back of the stove, masked by a loose brick, she found too, that his revolver and cartridges were not there. She stood up, her face dull, loose with anger and astonishment. They'd gone. They weren't coming back. She sat down at the table, unable to think beyond that point. She was like a woman in an unpleasant, fear-shot dream, who holds herself still, knowing that in a moment it will pass or conviction come that it is only a dream and not to be feared.

She sat there for a long time, silent and still. Then she got up and fetched the wine flask from the dresser. She drank a glass, and the wine had no taste in her mouth, only a wetness

that drove back the dryness for a moment to have it return more strongly, making her tongue stiff and unwilling in her mouth. Then slowly her thoughts began to shape themselves and she felt a calmness settle over her anger and fear, not swamping them, but holding them back for a time. Sandro and Tulio had left her. But there was more than that. They had left her in danger. When they failed to return, the police would come to her. They would find out about the anonymous letter, they would want to know why she had not told more, why she had not denounced Sandro fully to them. If she went to them now and told them all she knew, it would not serve her as an excuse, nor give her any gage of safety. She had known for a long time what was to happen. She should have come before, they would say. She had to protect herself. Sandro and Tulio wouldn't be missed until the next day. If she disappeared as well there was the chance that the police would assume she had gone with them. But where could she go? She knew at once what she must do. Her family were from Budva, far down the coast near the Albanian border. She had a brother and a sister, both married and in Albania, near Tirana. She got the steamship guide from the dresser drawer. There was a boat at six that evening which would take her to Kotor. From there she could go on to Budva. Her relations would hide her if there were trouble and later she could go across the border into Albania. Knowing what she must do, her future planned, her confidence returned.

She got up, and began to prepare herself a meal. Luca would never have deserted her, she thought, and she knew that she could not leave Dubrovnik without making a farewell visit to his grave.

She ate her meal, then washed up and tidied everything away, being careful to leave no sign that she had been there since the two men had gone. At four o'clock when the shops re-opened she took her small bag and went quietly down the

stairs. No one saw her go. In the town she bought a ticket for Kotor at the Putnik travel bureau and, stopping in the square for a moment, she picked from a flower stall a large bunch of marguerites for Luca's grave. Her boat did not go until six and she had plenty of time. She walked up the hill towards Gruz and the cemetery. The fresh wind had dropped and now a slow, hot air was coming in from the south, driving before it low banks of heavy clouds. The dust on the hill sprang up in sudden, angry spirals that worked grit into her eyes. The sirocco was beginning to blow for the first time for many days.

The flowers on Luca's grave were dead and brown. She cleared them away and placed her marguerites on the shelf. She crossed herself, and stood for a moment, thinking of Luca. Pity for him, for herself and a compassionate anger for the way life had treated them brought tears into her eyes. She turned away, her lips thinned with her emotion and began to walk down the gravelled sweep towards the tall cypresses that marked the entrance gate. The gatekeeper came out of the stone lodge at the gates and watched her approaching. He was an old, bald-headed man in a green baize apron. He had a kindly, sleepy face and as she came up to him he called to her gently—

"Here a moment, child."

She stopped, turning towards him, and he came up to her. He put out his hand and held her wrist, and his grasp was suddenly strong.

Zarko's face was beaming, almost boyish in its expression of mischievous triumph. He leaned with both hands on the telephone receiver where it rested on the instrument and his fingers played a quick tattoo on it. Lepovitch watched him cautiously, knowing that momentarily he had no defense against him. For a while, after Zarko had begun to talk to him when he had finished taking the telephone call, Lepo-

vitch had been angry, but the feeling had curiously dissipated before a quick relief, so strong that he could feel his nerves trembling, forcing him to put his hands in his pockets as he stood with his back to the wall map. A tiny beading of sweat had broken out under his chin, raising a soreness on the skin where he had shaved himself too closely that morning. But he kept all expression of his relief to himself. Until this moment things had been going badly. There had been no sign of Hudson, and they had learned an hour ago that Colonel Grol had cancelled his ticket for Makarska that evening.

"I'm going to handle her. I insist on it. You can go into the next room and listen." There was a new authority in Zarko's voice. He went on, underlining his triumph. "I've never been happy about that anonymous note. Ever since I found that wreath on the grave, I've had a feeling that one day whoever put it there would come back. I had the gatekeeper watch everyone and now . . ." He smiled, moving round to the mantelshelf, his back to Lepovitch, touching the trailing blue flowers gently, pleased with himself, excited by his own cleverness. ". . . and now we're going to have a talk with the girl who hated Raikes enough to betray him, and loved whoever lies in that grave enough to return and put flowers on it. I always said that it was here in Dubrovnik that we should find the answer."

Lepovitch moved to the door. With his fingers on the handle he paused. "Who is she?"

"Yelitsa Venetti—she works at the orphanage on Lokrum."

Lepovitch went out. Zarko sat down at his desk and switched on the microphone. Then he rang for Yelitsa. She was brought in and left alone with him. He watched her as she sat in the big armchair, drawn forward on to its edge, her hands held together, her teeth biting gently at the inner edge of her lip.

Zarko was sorry for her. It was always unpleasant when one had to handle women. He leaned forward and spoke quietly,

his voice friendly, seeking to give her the help which would draw from her what he wanted.

"Listen very carefully to me. I want you to help us, and if you show yourself willing, I'll do all I can for you. I'm not making any promises, but I fancy you've always wanted to help us—even gone so far towards doing it. We won't forget that, and I give you my word that I'll make things as easy as I can for you. But—" the word rang between them with a menace that made Yelitsa start— "tell me one lie, and I'll see that you never have the chance to tell another."

Not to his surprise he heard a half-moan escape from her and saw the peasant gesture of despair as she raised a hand to her face. Drive her too hard, he thought, and she would fall into a hysteria which would lose him time and maybe break his patience with its incoherence. He went on quickly, paternally, rising and going round to her.

"We know you wrote an anonymous letter denouncing the Englishman Raikes. We know your feelings for whoever lies in the grave at the cemetery. Now, tell me what else you know. About the other Englishman, Hudson, about whoever he is helping to escape and how it is to be carried out."

She began to talk, and he listened, moving quietly back to his desk, helping her with a question now and again. She kept her eyes from him, her voice unsteady, and Zarko knew that he was getting the truth. Within five minutes he had as much as she could tell him and Yelitsa was taken away. When Lepovitch came back into the room it was a quarter to six and they both realized that time was their greatest enemy. By a quarter past six they were both sitting in a police launch with the mainland dropping away behind them in the brown sirocco haze, heading for Metilini—a little less than a two-hour run before them.

Yelitsa—Zarko went over the facts and the arrangements he had made as the warm sea air beat back into his face—had known only that Sandro and Tulio meant to escape on the

Metilini run. She knew nothing of Hudson or of any man to escape from the hotel. Grol, he knew now, was a red herring. But a check at the hotel had shown that the only man missing was Joseph the waiter, who had taken his day off. And the girl, Franja, was missing too. From the Dubrovnik garrison he had got details of Sandro's run and knew that by now Sandro would be on his way to Metilini. He was not scheduled to call there but he should clear the island by about half-past eight. Zarko had telephoned the police at Metilini, giving his instructions. Sandro's boat was to be watched down the coast and its progress reported to Metilini against Zarko's arrival. The police were to go over the holiday crowd looking for Hudson, Joseph and Franja. Full descriptions had been given them. A watch was to be set up along the quayside and beaches and no one was to be allowed to use any of the boats. All sailing and rowing were to be curtailed.

Zarko pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his face. The last half-hour had been a busy one and he could feel the sweat against his body. He glanced across at Lepovitch. The man was sitting upright, stiff against the movement of the launch, his face set in hard lines. The clammy warmth of the sirocco swept back against them, and Zarko saw the fine beading of sweat on the man's cheek and forehead. No word passed between them. Lepovitch had been silent in the office while instructions and telephone calls had been made. He had walked up and down, biting gently at his nails. Now they had two hours before them, sharing the raucous little world of the thrusting launch, each aware of the other, of the one's triumph and of the other's bitter pride.

Lepovitch spoke suddenly. "That girl Yelitsa will do a life sentence. The bitch!"

"No. Five years, maybe. Less, if we both speak in her favor." Zarko emphasized the *both*. Then, after a pause, he went on—"After all, she's pulled us both out of a mess. You out of a bigger one than me. We should be grateful."

Lepovitch made no reply. He kept his eyes on the backs of the three Militia men forward.

Hudson had been right about Joseph. He had been angry and had not bothered to hide his feeling. Franja had sat silently at the foot of a pine while the two men had talked.

"First I have to look after her, and then you come along and turn the whole thing into a boy scouts' party." As he spoke Joseph had taken off his Norfolk jacket.

"I'm sorry, but I had to do it."

"Why? There was no need for it."

"I felt there was. Anyway I'm here now and we must both accept it."

Joseph handed him the jacket. "You'd better wear this. If anything does go wrong they'll have your description sent out here." He looked for a moment from Hudson to Franja. She was watching Hudson, her face a little solemn against their anger, pretending to be unaware of it. Joseph grunted. "I suppose you thought that if anything went wrong I'd have left her?"

Hudson slipped on the jacket. "Would you?"

"I've told you before one can't afford to be human in this life."

"No. It isn't really any kind of life at all, is it?"

"It has to be done. Anyway, we won't argue about it. I'm going to leave you. I'm going to the far side of the town. From the hill there I shall be able to see Sandro when he comes. I'll meet you outside the main gate of the town at eight. The light will be going then and we must look about for a boat to get out to Sandro. Keep out of the town until you have to go down."

He was gone, moving away through the pines. Hudson sat down by Franja.

"He was very angry, wasn't he?" She looked down at him as he lay.

"Yes. But not with me so much. He was angry with himself and with the way he has to live. Do you think we shall get anything to eat or drink? It's going to be a long time."

"I can go down to the town later." She looked at the spray of houses, the dusty arc of the quayside and the blue bowl of the bay. Flags were flying from one or two buildings and the quayside and square were full of the ant movement of the holiday crowd. From somewhere in the town came the faint sound of a brass band playing. Metilini had been one of the first islands to be liberated from the Germans and the anniversary came on the same day as an even older festival, some celebration which went back perhaps to the days when the growing year had moved Man to a Corybantic invocation of fertility for himself and his fields and the flocks which spread thinly over the grey hills. She said unexpectedly, surprising herself, "Why did you come back?"

Hudson did not reply at once. He rolled over and looked at her. She looked very young and very cool, leaning back against the rough bark of the pine, a venetian red which, contrasting with the paleness of her hair and the quiet repose of her face, innocent, still-eyed, the pale blue of the sky beyond, made him think of a Siennese painting of the quattrocento. Then he answered evasively.

"I don't know. I'm a methodical person, too logical and careful perhaps. Something in me insisted that for once in my life I do something for which I could find no reason." He dropped back to the turf, stretching himself. "You know," he went on, "I preferred Joseph as a waiter. He was playing a different part then, but somehow he fitted it better . . ."

He had deliberately avoided her question, but he could not deceive himself. He was glad to be here with her. He felt now happy and contented. No matter what had gone before, or what might come, he had the impression that nothing could mar this brief period of waiting. The evening was far

off and for the moment they were both free to enjoy the long sunlit hours without care.

His mood was given back by Franja and they lay, laughing and talking, isolated on their hillside, Metilini and the coming night remote from them.

At midday Franja went down into the square and brought back a bottle of wine, some fruit and three eggs, which they sucked. Hanging from her wrist she held up for Hudson to see, two paper masks.

"What on earth are those for?"

Franja laughed. "Towards evening everyone wears them. It's a part of the festival. I thought we might need them when we go down. They sell them in the square."

Hudson took the masks. They were badly shaped, of thin paper, but brightly colored and with some faint trace of pagan inspiration in them still, as though behind the crude grimaces and bulbous noses, the wicked leers and wide-gashed mouths there were still lingering elements of an ancient tradition. Franja took a mask from him and put it on. The face that looked down at him was laughing, grotesque with a gay wantonness, fixed with a bold, sensuous spirit of carnival. He reached up quickly and pulled her hand away. "Not before we eat—it'll take away my appetite."

After they had eaten, they moved along the edge of the wood following the sun. The afternoon moved by and with its passing came the warm sirocco wind and the sky through the pines took on the shabby tones of bad varnishing. The air turned damp with the heat, and the grasshoppers which had called all day in the turf along the edge of the wood began to be silent, and the noises from the town below came up to them, muted, struggling through a medium which seemed viscid, and bound by the pressure of the lowering sky. Both of them slept for a while, but the oppressive atmosphere made sleep restless for Hudson. He drifted away into a lethargic fantasy in which he was dancing with Franja, holding her

closely to him, moving through a haze of color and noise. They both wore masks, but now the stiff paper had a flexibility that matched the wildness inside them. She looked up at him, laughing, the painted mouth shouting something to him, the bright eyes warm with unshadowed desire. He suddenly knew there was something he must tell her and he dropped his head towards her, shouting, but in the din around them his words were lost. When he woke, much later, it was with a start, losing the memory at once of something which had driven him from sleep. Franja was lying on her side sleeping peacefully and behind her the dark colonnades of pine trunks were fading into the growing twilight. He reached out and took her hand. For a moment she slept on. Then she woke and sat up, her eyelids heavy and lazy like a disturbed kitten's.

"It's a quarter to eight. We must go down."

Hudson helped her up. They began to move down the hillside. The square was a mesh of small, colored lights now, and from the tower over the main gate a searchlight swept up and down the arc of the quay, flickering over the still waters of the bay, dragging its stiff length over the dusty waterfront, silvering for a moment the figures of the people by the water's edge.

As they reached the first of the houses, they put on their masks and entered the odorous darkness of a small alleyway at the far end of which part of the square could be seen, as noisy and bright as a fair booth. Coming on to the square they both stopped, held by the unexpectedness of the sight before them. Over by the main gate an orchestra on a raised platform was playing, the music amplified around the square by loudspeakers. Lights were strung across the fronts of the houses and shops and from a lamp standard on a small island in the center of the square flared four paraffin torches, great leaping tongues of yellow flame, wreathed with a thick, acrid smoke that in the sluggish air dipped and curled downwards. Crowded dancers weaved through the thin smoke-haze like

figures from some phantasmagoria: young men and women in their old partisan uniforms with bare brown arms and necks, red scarves and the silver flash of Tito's star from breast and bosom. Streamers of paper whipped through the air in brilliant parabolas. Above the music the feet on the cobbles beat out a tempestuous tattoo. Girls in peasant dress swung by, old men, old women, shirts flapping, suits tightly buttoned, jackets swinging free, patched trousers, long skirts, short skirts, bare feet, high-heeled shoes . . . a medley of bodies and clothing, laughter and blaring music. The square was peopled with demons and witches, satyrs and fauns . . . jovial eyebrows, bulging red cheeks, gaping painted mouths and wine-dark noses, a bacchanal swirl of faces that swam up from the brume of the torches, a whirlpool of bodies that touched, broke apart, flung out groping hands and dropped away into the shadows. And everywhere there was a wild, unrestrained feeling of happiness, as though the spirit celebrated here had nothing to do with any military liberation but went back to a greater liberation, the ancient freedom of the body from the rigors of a past winter, the Spring-fed freedom of the mind from worry and care before the ripe promise of the growing crops and fecund herds. Men and women laughed and sang and shouted, all enmity gone, and when the dance flung them to the edges of the square they dropped into the chairs along the house and café fronts and took glasses into their hands, drinking deeply, quickly, as though greedy of the passing moments, unwilling to spare themselves for even a moment's pause.

Outside each house and café the little groups of resting dancers leaned on their tables, heads nodding, the *pivo* and wine bottles stacked like untidy ninepins on the wet boards, their broad masks tilted back. And under the smoke wreaths and the wavering shadows their faces still seemed to be masked, caricatures of themselves, the abandon in their spirits changing the day-by-day caution and impassivity of their fea-

tures. Hudson turned to Franja, disturbed by the riot of movement and sound and touched by the pagan abandon which reached eagerly for him. For a moment he wanted to reassure himself that there were human faces still, the soft, unmoved faces of men and women. He found himself facing a young body, the bold sweep of breasts and the flexed forward thrust of a young thigh and torso and above this the face of a wild, laughing woman, nostrils flaring, the lips a great wound across the white cheeks, the eyes strange under the upsweep of broad black brows. He laughed then, already caught by the pulse and throb of the spirit alive in the square, and catching her arm he drew her into the dancers. She went with him, eager, held close to him, swinging and turning with him and the dance swallowed them up, took them to itself, gave them its wildness and flung them through the dark lanes of laughter and bodies. He felt his hands on her warm body, heard her shout something to him and called back and then, uncaring of words, whirled on, laughing, knowing only that while they moved out here there was nothing which could touch them, nothing that had claim on them except the sudden wild happiness and joy which flowed in and around them, pulsing, beating like the surge of a great heart which gave them life and an exultation which carried forgetfulness of all fear. And, illogical, but persisting with all the force of a vagrant idea, he had the feeling that this was what he had returned for, this moment of holding her, dancing with her and hearing her laughter, feeling the warmth of her breath strike against the bare skin of his neck as they swerved to avoid other dancers.

The band stopped playing and they dropped away, breathless, into chairs by a small table outside a café. They sat there, shaking still with silent laughter, and he put out his hand, holding hers still, anxious to keep her close to him. A waiter pirouetted up to them and put two bottles of beer, unbidden, on the table.

"You must drink from the bottle. No more glasses left." Then he was gone, sliding and cavorting back through the tables, disappearing under the floral-decorated portrait of Tito over the café door. The sight of the portrait suddenly sobered Hudson. He watched Franja drink and then he said—

"I wish there was nothing more for us to do except stay here and dance."

"So do I." Her words were breathless, eager—a girl jealous of a rich pleasure.

He laughed. "We've got other things to do. Some other time we can dance. I must go and see Joseph. You stay here."

"Don't be long . . . please."

Hudson pressed her hand for a moment and then rose. He walked slowly through the pavement crowd, working round towards the main gate, and as he went he saw an unmasked face, a face that was alive, puzzled and vaguely solemn. A young Militia guard, rifle slung over his shoulder was threading his way through the dancers, and as he went he peered frowning at the moving couples. And then Hudson saw two more guards moving through the crowd with a slow, helpless good-humor. And by the main gate another guard leaned back against the warm stones and watched the thin struggle of people coming in through the gate to join the dance. Hudson went, unhurried, around the square and through the archway. The eyes of the guard followed him for a moment, lost interest and turned to a fat peasant woman who was rolling with laughter between two men who helped her along.

Hudson slipped into the shadow of the great wall and moved down towards the first of the date-palm clusters. Beyond him the searchlight drew a bone-white finger across the water, and, as it passed, Hudson saw that along the curved stretch of the waterfront three guards had been sta-

tioned about fifty yards apart, and that the few people still on the dusty quay were now making their way towards the gateway to the town.

Joseph was waiting for him in the shadow of the palm, and he knew at once that something had happened. The man's face was dark with angry shadows.

"I thought you were never coming." The words were sharp, striking at Hudson.

"It's barely eight. Have you seen Sandro's boat?"

"Yes. There's something coming down the coast now with riding lights showing. It should be him. In another half-hour he'll be in. But it isn't that. Something's happening in this town. That searchlight up there isn't part of the celebrations. And neither are those guards by the water. For the last two hours they've allowed no rowboats to go out. Something's gone wrong and it's probably something to do with you. You should never have come!"

"I came back because I didn't trust you to take the girl with you." Hudson spoke sharply. They faced one another, both taut with animosity, and Hudson wondered at the malice of circumstance which forced him to work for Joseph against Zarko, a man whom he liked much more than Joseph.

Joseph made an angry, impatient movement, and as he did so, above the distant sound of the band and the singing dancers, a new sound crepitated against the black and silver echelons of light and darkness over the water. They turned and saw a small bow light probe through the night. Into the bay came a long, powerful launch. It swept across the water and turned into the far end of the quay, drawing alongside the broad steps which led down to the water. Five shadows jumped from it. They heard the hard echo of a command and four of the shadows moved swiftly across the dusty stretch of ground towards the main gate. The fifth stayed at the launch.

"Trouble." Joseph edged into the shelter of the palm and

Hudson went with him. The finger of searchlight played down to the limit of its depression and the four figures were suddenly vivid against an immense backcloth of night. Both men saw them clearly: Zarko, Lepovitch and two Militia guards. They went by them, walking quickly and disappeared under the archway.

Hudson looked across at Joseph. The man's face was set stiffly. It was the fear of such a moment as this which had brought Hudson back.

"What do we do now?" Hudson spoke gently.

Joseph made no answer for a while.

Hudson heard the dusty rustle of palm fronds close to him as the damp breeze stirred through them. Then Joseph turned and began to speak, his voice low and harsh.

"Sandro will be here shortly. That launch is the only thing in the bay which can catch him. It's got to be put out of action. You go back and get Franja. We've either got to swim or steal a boat. I'm going to look after the launch and the guard."

"Can you do it by yourself?"

Joseph gave a dry laugh. The anger between them was dying. "One's enough. The guard may have to be killed. It is better that I should do that. It's part of my profession. For you—it would be killing a man. For me—it is just another thing in my way."

He was gone, moving along the thick wall shadow. Hudson turned and went quickly back to the main gate. High above the arch a great red and white banner proclaimed—*Zivio drug Tito.*

The Metilini chief of police had had just enough to drink to make him a little less awed of Zarko and Lepovitch than he normally would have been. His office was over the main gateway, three small windows giving a view of the crowded square. Stolid, red-faced, his deliberate speech and movement

irritated both Zarko and Lepovitch. Lepovitch stood at one of the windows watching the crowd. Zarko lay back in a chair. Both men were hot, sweating with nervous impatience.

"As soon as I got your message I put the guards out. They've been checking identity cards and watching ever since. But you can see what it's like out there—" He waved a hand towards the window. "Like looking for a—"

"Yes, yes, come on man." Lepovitch swung round. He wanted to punch the man into quicker speech.

"We haven't found them. Venetti's boat had left the garrison but we've had it watched. The last report from the coast road says it's coming round the headland now. Its lights are on. If it's coming here it should be in the bay in another half-hour. I've done all I could, short of stopping the whole festival. This is a great day for Metilini. People aren't in the mood—"

"To hell with their moods! This is more important than any festival." Zarko swung himself upright. He went over to the window and looked out. The band was playing a waltz now and there was a gentler movement in the square. He felt Lepovitch's arm brush him as the man turned impatiently back to the room.

"They're here—on this island. There's no doubt of that. There's only one thing to do." Lepovitch's voice was fierce, staccato against the slow drift of waltz music.

"What?" Zarko turned.

Lepovitch faced him, taut, authority bracing him, his glasses glinting, a long hand scratching at the side of his lean face.

"We've got half an hour. We must go down there. Stop the music. Make an announcement and have every person take off his mask. If they're in the square we shall find them in ten minutes. A man with a cut on his face can't hide it."

"But that's nonsense!" Zarko protested angrily. "They may already be on Venetti's boat. They may not be in the

square. It's wasting time. We must go back to the launch and go out to the boat."

"Nonsense?" Lepovitch's eyes narrowed. "It's you who talk nonsense. Can't you see it's the only thing to do. Even if they're on the boat already we can catch them up in the launch at any time within the next hour. But they're not on the boat, otherwise it wouldn't be coming along on its normal course with all lights on."

"I say we should go out to the boat now. Once we've got that, then there's no escape for them wherever they are."

"No?" They were angry, pugnacious now, their frayed nerves strained by the events of the day, and the racking atmosphere of the sirocco. Lepovitch showed his teeth in a vicious grimace of impatience. "How do you know they haven't seen us come here? If they see us go out to the boat they'll know they must find some other escape. This island's twenty miles long. There are other boats and other islands. Let them get away now and we may never get them."

"We shall get them! But let's get the boat first."

Lepovitch came up to Zarko, tall, threatening, stirred to a point of violence by the opposition. "Why do you argue with me? Why do you always want to prove I'm wrong? I believe that you want them to escape. You're a traitor yourself. You're full of sympathy for these neo-fascist swine. Don't think I haven't noticed it! Don't think that isn't why I deliberately asked for full authority to be given to me. Now I'm going to use that authority!" His voice was almost screaming with anger, the relief from days of tension and dislike for this plump, stupid policeman.

Zarko wanted to hit him. He would have given much to have smacked hard at that thin, anger-torn face, to have cut brutally across the growing hysteria. He faced him for a moment, the sweat running on his large face, then with a weary movement of his shoulders he dropped back a step. What was the good? Every moment was wasting time.

"Go ahead, then," he said quietly. "It's your responsibility and I won't question it any further. But don't forget—I wanted to go out to the boat first." He looked across at the Metilini man and surprised him with an owlish look of pleasure on his face.

Lepovitch ignored them and moved towards the door. The two followed him.

Joseph was swimming. He had gone beyond the bay to the small bathing strand and there he had slipped into the water. Now he was moving quietly through the still shapes of the moored rowboats and yachts which masked the quayside steps from time to time. He could see the Militia guard with his slung rifle standing above the launch. To the side of the steps a small rowboat swayed at the end of a painter tied to a ring in the wall. He swam in slowly, almost reluctantly, knowing what he must do and finding the thought of it a tiredness in his mind which was a dull pain. Again and again without end these moments come, when one had to shut the mind from all thought except the dark images of violence. He would swim in to the steps, slide into the darkness where they made an angle with the wall and then wait while his breath came gently back to him. Hudson disliked and distrusted him. The girl made him angry with her innocent face and anxious eyes. But dislike and distrust, innocence and anxiety were worn and shabby with him. There was no feeling in him except the drive to go forward because he must. He would make the small sound which would bring the guard to the top of the steps, repeat it and see the man come cautiously, suspiciously, down a couple of steps, rifle ready, eyes seeking to fathom darkness—and only darkness waiting for him, a darkness to be shot with the long blood-streaks of pain when hands went up and caught his neck. The stupid, clumsy body would come twisting and beating down to the water. His hands would hold him under, his legs straddled across the

threshing bulk of uniform and straining limbs, and gradually the struggles would quieten, the body easing into a heavy inertness like a child dropping away from the disturbance of nightmare into heavy sleep, solid, still and shapeless. And then he would let go and the wet, ballooning clothes would make a dark patch on the darker face of the waters . . . All this . . . unless something went wrong as one day it must, for darkness never fought entirely on one side.

Hudson decided to give Joseph twenty minutes. He sat down beside Franja and quietly told her what had happened. She said nothing. But across the table her hand moved and he took it, pressing the soft palm reassuringly.

They sat with the untouched beer bottles between them, watching the slow movement of the waltz. And now, under the smoky light, beneath the colored streamers with their party slogans, even the chatter of dancers and drinkers seemed muted, touched with a passing sadness.

"When the next dance begins, we'll get up and dance across the square to the gate. Then we'll slip out." He looked at his watch and saw the long second-hand tick round. He heard the slow words of Franja drop between them, simple, yet full of the sound of other words, richer, more revealing, which are forever denied to the lips.

"Alone . . . I should have been afraid. I'm glad you came back."

The band began to play a quick march, stamping, beating away the lethargy and sadness and the square was a maelstrom of movement. The painted faces streamed by and the eyes through the masks glittered like jewels, hard, hard, hard . . .

Hudson took Franja by the arm and they joined the dancers. He watched the guards as he moved, turning and swinging . . . and the great dark spread of the gate's mouth drew closer. They were a yard from it, hemmed in by a knot

of dancers when the music stopped suddenly. For a moment the sound of voices and laughter carried on. Then silence collapsed through the hot air of the sirocco and lay across the colored quadrangle and people turned, slow curious movements, like the stir of a young plantation in a sudden breeze, facing towards the band. Arms dropped, couples moved a little apart and a voice, gigantic through the amplifiers, reached rasping across the square.

"Comrades . . . The People's Republics are always in danger. In this square now are three traitors. They are working to destroy all which we have fought to create. They must not succeed. When I finish speaking you must all take off your masks. Let each man look at his neighbor, let each woman search out the face of the man she stands by. The chief man we want is tall, wears a blue shirt, grey trousers and down his right cheek is a long, fresh cut. He is an Englishman, an agent of the capitalist warmongers who hate all true democracy. Find him and you will find with him the other two, another man and a young woman, fair-haired, slim . . . People of Metilini, comrades, we ask your help. Each one of you will now take off your mask. Let no one hesitate, for hesitation can only be a sign of guilt . . ."

There was silence. Gone was the happiness now; gone the wild, pagan abandon. For a moment there was no movement in the square, as though each soul feared that in the act of unmasking the stigmata of treason might have marked the hot, sweat-runnelled cheek, the soft, down-touched curve. Then movement and sound broke across the crowded forms. Arms lifted like the pale sway of moonlight branches, heads swung, and fingers sought the corded fillets which held the masks, and the stir of the crowd was like the stir of a wind-swayed forest, a forest studded with eyes, eager to seek out the guilty, eager to flame with anger against the helpless ones who had been caught in the dark aisles.

Hudson reached up for his mask and began to feel for the

cord and as he did so he said quietly to Franja, "We're going to run for it. The moment I move follow me." Through his mask he saw her reaching for her own. He turned, slipping the cord over his head and he measured the distance to the guard in the arched gateway. The man was watching the crowd.

The masks came off and faces turned. Hudson drew off his mask and found Franja's face, still, anxious, fear large in her eyes. A man close to him moved forward. Hudson saw an upflung arm point at him, and the man's mouth gaped, ugly with eagerness, as he shouted. Hudson took Franja's arm and jumped forward. The guard saw him coming and his hand went to his rifle. Hudson hit him and he went down, the loose weapon clattering on the stones. He ran, pulling Franja, and behind them a great shout swamped the square.

Under the arch their own footsteps rang sharply, echoing in the high vault of darkness above them. The great sweep of dusty quayside was bare before them as the searchlight splayed downwards, thinning the wall shadow to a narrow strip.

Behind them, the crowd surged into the archway. A rifle shot sounded above the wolfish babel. The bullet kicked into the ground at Hudson's side and the flung dirt stung his cheek waspishly. He raced on, not sparing his speed, half-pulling Franja after him as she drew on all the strength of her fear to keep up.

Away to the right, far up the quay he saw one of the guards drop to his knees and in the steady searchlight beam he saw the upflung rifle, the stilled poise as the man aimed. He waited for the shot. Over his shoulder he saw that the crowd had fanned out behind, streaming after them like a rabble of phantoms. If the guard missed them his bullet would rip into the crowd behind. Then the shot came. Away to the left came a high, glutinous sob that dropped suddenly into a long scream. Two other guards came racing across the quay at an angle to head them off. A glance at the direction of

the launch showed him that they could make it with about twenty yards to spare. The searchlight jerked up, giving them a fresh arc of naked light to run in and at the fringe of its beam he saw a black figure standing above the launch. He prayed then, letting panic force his words. Oh, God—let it be Joseph and not the guard. The man dropped to his knees, the rifle swung up. Then, after an age which was compounded of the awful silence ahead, the mad drumming of his heart and the beat of his feet, tumultuous and rhythmic against the lighter thud of Franja's sandals beside him, and the animal rumble of sound behind, Hudson saw the stab of flame from the rifle muzzle. There was the crash of glass and the searchlight went out. Before him, blessed, and adding strength to them both, he heard Joseph call his name.

They ran and now from before them Joseph's rifle spoke again, short, angry words, flung into the face of the pursuing crowd who halted for a moment, spreading out, an amorphous blur in front of the bright mouth of the gateway. Then other rifles answered back.

Their feet struck the hard cobbles of the quayside. Then Hudson heard the sound of a bullet hit flesh. He felt the shock travel from Franja through her fingers and up his arm and she fell. He heard himself call her name with a desperate urgency as he dropped beside her, slipping his arm round her shoulders.

"Franja!"

She moved, trying to rise, and behind them he saw the dark crowd spreading towards them, the air full of the menace of cries. He picked her up, saw the long blood-score against the side of her face where she had fallen, and as he began to run he worried for a second about the sandal which fell and was left behind them. He raced on, holding her, crouching low as bullets hit the cobbles and ricochetted into the night-bound sea. There was then no more thought in him. Events ceased to have orderly succession. It was life in

a conglomerate of doing and being without feeling. He flung Franja into the small boat brutally, her head striking the wet thwart. Joseph held to the steps, firing, and then pushed off. He knew that he made a wild grab for the oars and was pulling, pulling, his breath sobbing and his eyes on the still figure of Franja. Behind him in the darkness the lights of an approaching schooner shone red and green.

He pulled out, Joseph lying in the stern and firing at the land, keeping the crowd and the guards back. He rowed, sliding for cover between the moored yachts, and Joseph shouted wildly, encouraging and exhilarated. "The launch will be out of action for hours. We can do it. Sandro's just coming in."

He turned and saw the pale bulk of the circling schooner, its motor *put-putting* gently, and he shouted:

"Sandro! It's Hudson!"

He knew, later, that Sandro standing at the schooner's side alert because of the noise ashore, and blessed with an advantage the guards could never have, had turned and struck at the guard standing by him. Tulio, revolver in his pocket, had seen the second guard leap forward towards Sandro and had quickly freed the weapon. With an angry grin on his face he had pulled the trigger and watched the man fall. Then without a second look had gone to the rail and swung himself over, waiting to catch the small boat that came surging towards the schooner.

An hour later they were in a thick, driving pall of low cloud and mist, warm and heavy, full of moisture that beaded the deck and left long smears across the rail where the hand touched it or a rope chafed. They had eight hours of darkness before them and every moment brought Italy nearer. Hudson looked back towards the little wheelhouse. The three of them, Sandro, Tulio and Joseph were grouped there, close together, talking quietly, a mutter of sound hardly audible

above the steady drive of the marine engine. They seemed far away, already like strangers, figures which had peopled a dream and now persisted for a while in the memory.

He felt Franja stir on the pile of canvas, where she lay, held in the curve of his arm. He looked down and found her eyes open. The sleeve of her dress was torn where his impatient fingers had ripped the stuff to get at her wound. About the top of her arm a length of rag was bound tightly, discolored against the pale flesh. The wind took the loose edge of her torn sleeve. He smiled, bending and pulling closer about her the blanket which Sandro had given her. She said nothing. There was between them an expanding understanding which while this night lasted would have no need of words. He leaned over again and kissed her. Her free arm moved around his neck, and the fingers, dirty and dust-stained, the nails broken from her fall, slid into his hair, holding him, hurting him with the fierceness of their grip.

In Metilini the crowd were dancing again. The paraffin lights flared, the long slogans drooped in the lax wind, and Zarko, watching the dancers noticed that many of the paper masks were now split and broken, limp and stained with perspiration. Here and there couples had thrown them aside. He wondered what would happen now. Tomorrow Belgrade would know, and after that? For the moment he found it hard to attach any importance to his anxiety. He might survive, probably would, since if they had done as he wanted there would have been no escape, and the responsibility for the failure was not directly his. But one never knew. He might lose his job . . . he could always be a wheelwright, always find something for his hands. But he was sorry for Lepovitch.

The man was sitting at the table behind him, his shoulders drawn down, no longer arrogant with the tigerish confidence of the young men from Belgrade. It would be hard for him. He went over and put his hand on Lepovitch's shoulder and

the gesture was friendly, sympathetic. At the touch Lepovitch stood up, taking into his hand the loose sheet of paper before him. He walked away folding the paper neatly. The words on it, the draft of a telegram he meant to send, were held clearly in his mind. *Returning Belgrade tomorrow. Mission here a failure.* He could lie, pervert many facts, but could he build up a case against Zarko which would give Belgrade a victim and excuse his own failure? At least, he had to try.

"Come down to the square and have a beer," Zarko said kindly. "We both need it." He went towards the door, opening it, waiting for Lepovitch. The man shook his head.

"No. I've a telegram I must send."

Zarko shrugged his shoulders and went out. Lepovitch hesitated for a moment, then picked up the telephone.

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